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AGENDA

By AVINOM BAR-YOSEF

Preparing maps for Albright

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a dress rehearsal on Monday evening at the Likud faction meeting for today's meeting with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Netanyahu brought Foreign Minister David Levy along with him to the faction meeting, following a proposal to include Levy in the entourage which left for Paris last night.

Since forming his government, Netanyahu has preferred to leave matters vague so as to allow room for maneuvering in the negotiations. However, he now has said, in response to some of his colleagues who claimed that any map submitted to the Americans would be considered an opening move rather than a final one: "This is essential for propaganda purposes abroad."

One has to admit — the man has some creative ideas. Propaganda is usually designed to promote policy. This is the first time that I can recall that policy has been determined as a way of "promoting" propaganda.

See AGENDA, Page 8

Gil pleads innocent

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

Yehuda Gil, the former Mossad agent charged with feeding his superiors false information that almost brought Israel to the brink of war with Syria last year, yesterday pleaded innocent to all charges against him.

Gil was brought to the Tel Aviv District Court, where his trial began behind closed doors, in a car whose windows were curtained, and he entered surrounded by security guards. Publication of his likeness is banned.

The indictment accused him of giving false information to the Mossad with the intention of damaging the state. According to the prosecution, the alleged crime falls under the espionage law.

He is also charged with receiving money under false pretenses and theft. The prosecution noted that only a few of the charges were released for publication.

Gil denied all the charges in the indictment.

See GIL, Page 3

Unlikely angel swoops from the sky

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

On his way to honor a fallen IDF soldier yesterday, OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan helped save the life of a Palestinian motorist trapped in a mangled West Bank wreck.

Dayan had been flying in his military helicopter from his Jerusalem headquarters toward the Galilee, when he spotted a traffic accident between a semitrailer and



Communications Minister Limor Livnat poses with spy Jonathan Pollard yesterday at the Butner, N.C. penitentiary. The two hold a book Livnat gave him celebrating Israel's 50th anniversary in 1998, the year Pollard hopes to be set free. (AP)

Pollard blasts Levy for opposing meetings

By HILLEL KUTTLER

Convicted spy Jonathan Pollard yesterday lashed out at Foreign Minister David Levy for allegedly discouraging meetings with Israeli officials with him.

Pollard compared Levy to the "idiot" who designed the flawed bridge that collapsed at last summer's Maccabiah Games.

The Foreign Ministry last night issued a statement denying it had any policy against visits to Pollard and asserting it is making constant efforts to effect his release.

Pollard, serving a life sentence at the federal penitentiary in Butner, North Carolina, met for an hour yesterday with visiting Communications Minister Limor Livnat, along with Israel's deputy consul from Atlanta and two Israeli reporters.

Pollard expressed "profound sorrow and remorse" for passing secrets to Israel while a civilian analyst of the US Navy.

"My motives may have been well and good, but they only serve

to explain why I did what I did. They certainly don't serve as an excuse for breaking the law," he said.

He also called upon Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Labor Party leader Ehud Barak to send a joint letter to the American Jewish community that would enable Livnat or Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman to come to Washington and officially seek congressional assistance in pressing for Pollard's release.

"[This is] the first time that an Israeli prime minister writes a personal letter to Jonathan Pollard," Livnat told Israeli reporters. "The time has come to stop being quiet and to make open, public efforts to stand by his side — but mainly to bring about his release," she said.

Pollard said there are senators who support him but are reluctant to argue on his behalf, because they believe the Israeli government and opposition "don't ask in a way that suggests they are serious." Therefore, Pollard says they

have told him, "Why should we expend the political capital on going to the president?"

But Pollard's harshest words were reserved for Levy. Noting that he heads the Geshet (bridge) Party, Pollard said: "He sees himself as a Geshet. Right now, the type of Geshet that he is exhibiting is like the bridge at the Maccabiah Games. It was designed by an idiot, it was foolishly constructed, and it ultimately collapsed on those people who relied on it to safeguard their lives."

"I don't think that Mr. Levy really wants his Geshet, whether it be in my case or politically speaking within Israel, to be seen as that kind of unstable, self-serving, ultimately disastrous affair. I would like to ask him then, from the bottom of my heart, as we say in America, to please be a team player. There is enough honor... in Israel to go around for everyone. When I come home, he won't have to worry about me anymore."

Survey: US Jews concerned about peace process, security

Pluralism ranks lower on priority list

By MARILYN HENRY

NEW YORK — Although they have been galvanized by the controversy over pluralism in Israel, American Zionists are far more concerned with the peace process and Israeli security, according to a survey conducted for the Conservative movement recently. "Pluralism was not a big winner," said Saul Shapiro, whose market-research company, Customer Perception Specialists, conducted the survey.

Among all three streams, concerns about Israel's security and the peace process ranked ahead of pluralism, conversion and the religious-secular conflict.

The survey was based on a random sample of 200 American Jews, which was drawn from among the 149,000 who had registered for last summer's Zionist elections. It was undertaken to help Mercaz, the Zionist arm of the Conservative movement, identify the interests of its constituents.

The Americans elected delegates for 145 of the 580 seats for the 33rd Zionist Congress. Celebrating the centenary of Zionism, the congress meets in Jerusalem next week.

Though pluralism was the prime factor in the American campaign,

it did not top American Jews' concerns about Israel, the survey indicated.

Respondents were told they were participating in an opinion poll on Israel and asked to indicate which three of eight issues "in Israel were most important for American Jews." The survey identified the issues as: Israeli security; pluralism; conversion problems in Israel; the Israeli government; Palestinian problems; the peace process; the conflict between the religious and secular; and the conflict between Orthodox and non-Orthodox.

See SURVEY, Page 8

Levy shuns talks with Albright

By JAY BUSHINSKY

PARIS — Foreign Minister David Levy yesterday refused to join Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's meeting with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Paris today, saying the discussion would be sterile in the absence of firm government commitments on a West Bank withdrawal.

"A prime minister who goes on

Instead, Netanyahu chose to confer privately with National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, who had accused him of jeopardizing national security and crossing red lines that threatened the incumbent coalition's continued existence. A senior government official said Netanyahu managed to mollify Sharon, but the prime minister remained unable to convince Levy that his trip to Paris

Palestinian Authority complies fully with its obligations to combat terrorism during the next six months.

At the same time, the ministers agreed that Netanyahu would present a general outline of the prospective troop pullback to Albright while refraining from putting any maps on the table.

Following yesterday's three-hour cabinet meeting, Netanyahu

PM accused of trading 'territories for terror' Page 2

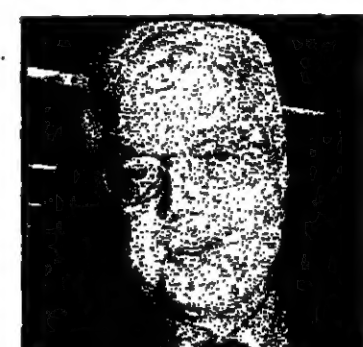
an important mission such as this must come ready with ideas and proposals that both embody our interests and can advance the peace process," Levy said.

Netanyahu arrived in Paris last night confident he would be able to convince Albright that Israel has very limited room for maneuver in delineating the next IDF pullback in the West Bank.

A political source familiar with the prime minister's game plan said Netanyahu will not present a precise proposal for withdrawal, or unfurl any maps except the Oslo map.

"It is possible to explain our interests by means of a verbal description," the source said.

After the fourth cabinet meeting on the West Bank withdrawal issue proved inconclusive yesterday, Levy urged Netanyahu to reconvene the ministers for a fifth time before his departure for Paris, but the prime minister refused.



Foreign Minister David Levy (left) and National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon yesterday. (Isaac Harari)



would be worthwhile.

Levy said it would be impossible to present any clear-cut definitions of the prospective redeployment and that there was no sense in simply "chewing the fat."

Sharon issued a statement predicting that Israel will carry out the troop pullback required by the Oslo Accords and that Netanyahu would be able to discuss its general outline with Albright without submitting any maps.

Netanyahu left for Paris after securing a cabinet majority against any further IDF redeployment in the West Bank unless the

and Sharon met at length before issuing a joint statement saying that "the prime minister is traveling to Paris to discuss Israel's interests in a permanent accord."

The statement said Netanyahu would take with him a map of the Oslo interim accord "on which he will explain Israel's interests, which are still to be discussed by the cabinet."

There will be no discussion of the percentage of West Bank land to be handed over in a future pullback, the statement said.

See LEVY, Page 2

Playing with political fire

ANALYSIS

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai.

The precise wording of Sharon's angry outburst at Tuesday's stormy cabinet session, which was aimed directly at Netanyahu, bears serious consideration. It could be his opening shot across the bow of Netanyahu's politically unstable boat: "You know that I always made every effort to safeguard the existence of this government. This was the case until you reached the red line of risk to the national interest. To my regret, you are about to cross this line."

Tugging in the opposite direction is Foreign Minister David Levy. He wants Netanyahu to present a definitive geographical formula for the impending redeployment. If Sharon's rhetoric or the suspected National Religious Party plan to bring down the government by June prevents

Netanyahu from talking *tachlis*, the tenuous alliance with Levy and his Geshet Party may dissipate.

Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy is moving into a concurrent confrontation with Netanyahu over his NRP colleagues' fear that the Mordechai map may leave a slew of Jewish settlements outside the IDF's future defensive perimeter and therefore at the mercy of the Palestinian Authority.

In short, the road Netanyahu is compelled to travel is strewn with political mines. His strategy of buying time by binging redeployment to a genuine war against terrorism by the PA's police and security services may turn out to be a short-term palliative.

The upshot of this may be that Netanyahu either will not get the mandate he needs from his coalition to propose to the Knesset a second IDF redeployment by June, or that the prospective pullback will force him to go back to the polls while continuing to run the country as head of a caretaker government, unable to take momentous decisions.

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in brief

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Shas pushes for budget changes

By DAVID HARRIS

Shas will refuse to vote for the 1998 state budget in the Knesset unless the government makes changes in a bill concerning health, child benefits and old-age pensions, according to party MKs Yitzhak Cohen and Nissim Dahan.

The budget may not be able to pass without Shas' support.

The principal proposals of the two MKs are that the chapters of the bill concerning health be voted on separately and that planned cuts to child benefits be omitted.

Treasury officials began a series of meetings Tuesday night with Shas MKs in an attempt to reach a compromise.

"We have no alternative to [cuts in] child benefits," said State Budget Director David Milgrom, who has to ensure that the 1998 budget deficit does not fall foul of the government-approved target of 2.4 percent of the gross domestic product. In order to achieve

this the government has cut the budget by NIS 2.3 billion for next year.

Knesset sources also claimed yesterday that Shas is demanding that its Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishai be given joint responsibility for setting the basket of health services.

The opposition yesterday attempted to separate child benefits, healthcare and certain communications items from the rest of the budget.

However, in light of the Shas-Treasury talks, only items concerning cable television news services were removed and were to be discussed separately early next year.

In the coming days Labor Party Chairman Ehud Barak will meet MKs from Yisrael Ba'aliya, The Third Way, and Shas in a bid to present a united front against the 1998 state budget, Barak said yesterday.

Last night Yisrael Ba'aliya MKs were scheduled to meet Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman over

demands for better mortgages, but the session was postponed at the last minute.

It is widely believed in the Knesset that for the Treasury to successfully see the budget through it will have to add NIS 1.5b. to the overall package, the equivalent of a 1 percent increase in VAT, a solution being suggested by several MKs.

The final votes on the budget in committee will be on Sunday, before intensive debate begins in the plenary ahead of a final vote on December 31.

Speaking to journalists yesterday, Barak accused the present administration of being "heartless" and "working against the interests of the people."

Israel had enjoyed four years of tremendous growth, he said, particularly in the sphere of foreign investments, but the present government has all but destroyed that progress.

"We'll see the fruits of the cessation in investments under the current government in the coming quarters," he said.

Despite the denial by economists that Israel is in recession, Barak claimed that "what there is in reality is a hard recession."

He also suggested that representatives of the International Monetary Fund, which recently gave the economy a reasonably clean bill of health, "don't look at social issues" and argued that, unlike other countries, "here we need more social sensitivity."



Labor MK Avraham Shohat (right), a former finance minister, heads down a hallway to the Knesset Finance Committee Meeting yesterday alongside MK Michael Kleiner of Likud. (Israel Harezi)

GIL

Continued from Page 1

His attorney, Yigal Shapira, said even if the facts in the indictment were true, Gil could not be charged with espionage, because what he did was not to the benefit of anyone.

"An act of espionage has to be to the advantage of one side or another," Shapira said. "But Gil is not being charged of spying for any side; therefore this clause doesn't apply."

Asked about the possibility of a plea bargain, Shapira said, "regarding the espionage charge, not a chance." He pointed out that if a plea bargain is worked out, it will not be on any of the charges released for publication.

There is a difference in the interpretation between the defense and the prosecution, which will be determined during the trial, said prosecutor Dvora Hen. "We think the facts uphold the charges."

Gil, 63, was arrested a month ago on suspicion of feeding the Mossad for years false information he said he obtained from a high-ranking Syrian official.

According to the charges, Gil was highly respected in the Mossad, and the false information he gave had a significant influence on state security, insofar as it affected Israeli assessments of Syria's military and political intentions. The trial is to resume on December 28.

El Al to choose Airbus or Boeing aircraft by tonight

By HANAH SHAPIRO

El Al is to decide today which of two airlines will comprise its new fleet of medium-range planes - the European-built Airbus or the American-built Boeing.

The deal is estimated at some \$200 million for five aircraft, including three of either the Boeing 737-700 or the Airbus 319, with about 110 seats, and two of the larger Boeing 737-800s or Airbus 320s, with up to 150 seats.

According to El Al spokesman Nachman Kleinman, the aircraft chosen will be used for regional flights to Antalya, Istanbul, Cairo, Athens, Cyprus, and Amman. They would also serve for second-evening flights to all the major destinations in Europe, thus freeing larger aircraft for flights to the Far East.

The aircraft of both companies are very similar in concept, size, and interiors, although the Airbus salespeople have argued that theirs is a totally new design, while the Boeing is only a new generation of an older model. But Boeing also talks of its product as a new airplane, with new cockpit

and new wings. The Airbus is marginally wider.

However, all things being equal, the decision would probably be made on the basis of price and time of delivery. As of last night the Airbus bid was slightly lower, but that could change by this evening, when the El Al board is due to make its final decision.

Boeing also has a backlog in production, but the company could well put off other customers in order to push forward the El Al order. One alternative, for Boeing, would be for El Al to lease at least some of the aircraft until its own planes are ready, but this would increase the price of the package.

There is also the question of American government pressure. It would be hard to explain to Israel's closest ally why what is still a state-owned company chose the competition. However, if El Al does give in to Israeli government pressure, it might well demand compensation for doing so, which might come in handy at a time when the company is facing privatization.

Neeman threatened to resign over health budget

Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman threatened Tuesday night to resign if Shas successfully removes the health-care chapters from the 1998 budget arrangements bill, according to Labor's chief economist spokesman Avraham Shohat.

Former finance minister Avraham Shohat said yesterday that Neeman made the threat during a conversation with Shas MK Aryeh Deri. Shas is demanding the health section of the budget proposals be discussed and voted on separately, if the government wants the party's support.

Neeman's spokesman declined to comment, and Treasury Director-General Shmuel Slavin said, "I know nothing about this."

Shas MK Yitzhak Cohen also denied knowledge of the conversation, saying Neeman is free of the need to make such political threats as he is not a member of any party. David Harris

DRIVE CAREFULLY

HEBREW PRESS REVIEW

By ORLY AHARONI

The price of recession

The recession and the growing unemployment rate received headlines in the Hebrew press this week, referring to the massive protests of jobless citizens in the towns severely hit by unemployment.

"There are no free meals in this game," writes Ma'ariv's Moshe Perl. "You cure the inflation disease and slow down the economy and find that 8.1 percent of your work force is unemployed."

He adds that according to the forecasts, the situation will worsen. "The true remedy is obviously the renewal of growth that can occur in a matter of months if the politicians don't tamper with it."

According to Yediot Aharanot's Sever Plotzker, the unemployment rate will not decrease next year, due to problems such as political tension, decline in tourism, the severe crisis in Asia, etc. He says the real test facing the prime minister, finance minister and the governor of the Bank of Israel lies in their ability to implement the solution "to increase investments, manufacturing and profits without increasing the government deficit."

"The real answer for recession... lies in retraining workers for hi-tech industries," Ha'aretz editorializes, adding that the government should pour money into infrastructure in the Negev.

Danger to democracy

The court pronounced an unprecedented heavy fine on Ace hardware store for opening its doors on Shabbat in yet another debate involving the split between the religious and secular communities.

In his commentary entitled "Theocracy in the power of the law," Ma'ariv's Moshe Negbi states that the secular community should not complain against the court that enforced the law, but against the Knesset that passed it years ago. "The law directly damages the freedom of religion,

which is also the freedom from religion," he writes, adding that the verdict exposed "deterioration to theocracy... where heretics are punished for not keeping commandments that apparently stand above the freedom of the citizen and the value of equality."

B. Michael in Yediot refers to a recent Shas MK's proposal to create special army units for haredi soldiers, claiming that "if this idea is not buried soon, Israel might find a foreign army within its own army." He adds that entire army units whose loyalty lies in an authority which is above the law "are not only a danger to democracy, but an indication marking its end."

Going El Al

The national airline company has attracted media attention on two issues: El Al's intention to purchase five airplanes; either the American Boeing or the European Airbus and the new deal that the company is offering its customers - a flight to nowhere.

Referring to El Al's considerations in purchasing the airplanes, Ma'ariv's Yosef Lapid says the decision is not only professional but also political. "It is highly unlikely that Israel will receive from the Americans \$3 billion in economic assistance annually and use part of that money to purchase a European plane in competition with the American one."

Ron Miebreg, also in Ma'ariv, refers to El Al's offer to catch a few hours' flight in the Middle Eastern skies for a few hundred shekels "the flight to nowhere."

Miebreg warns against the dangers of flying and the absurdity of the suggestion: "it is imperative to clarify how foolish, illogical and frivolous the idea of filling a plane with people is... and loading them with all the risks only to let them fly with no destiny or purpose," he writes, adding that "only government involvement can prohibit El Al from creating an aerial amusement park in Israeli skies."

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Sneh warns of Iranian attack

By BATSHEVA TSUR

Diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran from developing non-conventional weapons have failed and, despite soft talking from the new Iranian president, Tehran poses a real threat to Israel's security, MK Ephraim Sneh (Labor) said yesterday.

"We have good reason to assume that in 18 months Iran will have the first models of the Hishab-3 ballistic missile which has a range of 1,500 kilometers," Sneh said.

"Israel is left to face this threat alone and therefore has to act alone."

Sneh, who has been following developments in Iran closely for the past five years, said the Russians are giving Tehran the technology and that the Iranians already have biological and chemical warheads.

"According to intelligence estimates, they may have a nuclear

warhead within 18 months. There is therefore a threat that in a few years' time, Iran will have the ability to strike Israel with weapons of mass destruction," he said.

Sneh expressed concern that the US's will to do more to contain an Iranian threat of aggression would be dissipated by what appeared to be a mood of change in Tehran. The US attempts to build a coalition against Tehran had failed because of other countries' interests in Iranian oil, he added.

"Now there are differences of opinion and the approach in Washington is more conciliatory. More people are being tempted by the soft-worded approach of President Mohammed Khatami while the real [decision-making] power is still in the hands of [Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali] Khamenei," Sneh said. Khatami has not made overtures

to Israel, Sneh said, adding that it also is important to note that he had spoken about "the American people" and not the administration.

"The regime in Tehran declares that Israel is its main ideological

rival and we can't ignore this. The Jewish people can't be the victims of crazy regimes twice in one century," Sneh was speaking following a meeting of the Knesset's State Control Committee that he had

called to discuss Israel's preparedness for the possibility of an Iranian attack. The committee decided to ask Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to appear before it in two weeks' time.

'Russia, US working to keep weapons from Iran'

Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Viktor Posolavsky told Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein yesterday in Moscow that Russia has increased cooperation with the United States to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

He added that Russia has not taken any decision about cooperating with Iran in the field of non-conventional weapons.

Russia has also increased security supervision over Iranian students studying in Moscow, and expelled an Iranian diplomat accused of espionage several weeks ago, Posolavsky said.

Posolavsky also criticized Israel, saying that Iran has cooperated with nuclear supervision authorities while Israel does not.

He also told Edelstein that in the wake of a recent visit to Damascus he didn't detect any change in Syria's position regarding negotiations with Israel.

On a related issue, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Alexei II told Edelstein that he plans to visit Israel in 1998, along with Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Jerusalem Post Staff

Ministry blasted for rabies outbreak

By LIAT COLLINS

More questions than answers were heard in the Knesset yesterday when the outbreak of rabies was raised by Micha Goldman (Labor).

Among the questions Goldman asked was why no extensive rabies vaccination program had been carried out until now and why there had been no public information campaign on how to act.

"It's an intolerable situation when in the past year three people have died of rabies and every day more infected animals are discovered," he said.

Goldman also criticized the fact that the oral vaccination program for wildlife has been stuck in the Agriculture Ministry apparently for lack of funds. "We should remember that the current outbreak occurred, to a large extent, because the vaccination program was stopped three years ago," he said. "Now we are paying the price."

He called on the ministry's veterinary services to act together with animal welfare groups, including Let the Animals Live.

That plea was made after representatives of the Health and Agriculture ministries earlier this week blamed the animal welfare groups for the outbreak of rabies, saying they had prevented the veterinary services from doing their job of killing strays by pressing police charges against them.

Let the Animals Live founder member Benny Schlezinger said in response that the veterinary services were at fault for not acting properly and not acting in the high-risk areas.

"And we will continue to file police complaints in cases of animal cruelty," he said. "We are not against the humane killing of strays per se under the circumstances, but we have filed charges in cases where it was done inhumanely, in which the animals are caused suffering by poisoning, and in cases in which domestic pets were killed in their own yards. In many of these incidents, the pets were vaccinated and had owners."

He is calling for the ministry to supply animal groups with the \$1-a-shot rabies vaccine at cost price instead of making them pay a license fee.

Nature society wins Knesset backing

By LIAT COLLINS

The call went out from the Knesset podium yesterday to save the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel. The fight united such unlikely partners as Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled (Tsomet) and Meretz leader Yossi Sarid.

"The Knesset is united behind the SPNI," Deputy Speaker Shevah Weiss said.

Peled, answering several motions to the agenda, called on all MKs to sign up as members. The issue was raised following reports that a group, led by Bar Association head Dror Hoter-Ishai, was trying to take control of the group at next month's internal elections, motivated by his involvement in land development projects opposed by the conservationists.

Hoter-Ishai has denied the accusations. Peled said there was no doubt that the SPNI plays a central role in preserving the environment and the country's physical character and in education.

MK Ophir Pines (Labor) said there was a real threat to the SPNI. "This Knesset must stand by the SPNI and not allow the entrepreneurs to take over the group," he said. Similar sentiments were expressed by Haim Oron (Meretz), Alex Lubotzky (Third Way), Ahmed Sa'ad (Hadash), Micha Goldman (Labor), Shaul Yahalom (National Religious Party) and Michael Nudelman (Yisrael Ba'Aliya).

At a meeting of the Knesset Interior Committee, Hoter-Ishai said: "The terrible propaganda of the type being carried out by the SPNI against us has no place in an enlightened country."

In these times you cannot AFFORD to be without THE JERUSALEM POST INTERNATIONAL EDITION

Strange bedfellows

An unusual coalition of haredi and religious MKs from the coalition and MKs from Meretz and the Arab parties yesterday got the subject of a compulsory draft for everyone removed from the Knesset agenda yesterday.

The issue was raised as a joint

bill by Yossi Beilin and Yona Yahav (both Labor). It called for compulsory service for all citizens, including Arabs and haredim.

When Beilin and Yahav saw they did not have a majority for the bill, they turned it into a motion to the agenda instead, apparently assuming their party members would support the idea as a motion.

If a private members bill fails, it cannot be raised again for six months, a situation they wanted to avoid.

Even as a motion it was roundly defeated 51-19. Among those who supported it was Labor leader Ehud Barak. MK Shlomo Ben-Ami (Labor) abstained.

Dog day

At a time when the country is in a panic over rabies, the Knesset yesterday recognized a positive aspect of dogs. In an unanimous vote, the plenum passed preliminary reading of a bill by MK Yossi Sarid (Meretz) and MK Yossi Katz (Labor) which would allow access to public places for all trained guide and helping dogs, not just those for the blind.

To prove the need for the bill, the two MKs invited to the Knesset some people who rely on their dogs for their eyes, ears, protectors and friends. Eight-year-old Dana, who is paralyzed as a result of CP, arrived with Sugar, who is trained to fetch her objects and help her move in a walking frame. She says there are places like hotels, swimming pools and cinemas which won't allow her to bring her dog.

Dog day II

Who does MK Ruby Rivlin (Likud) sleep with? The answer, by his own admission in the

Knesset plenum yesterday, is Stefan, his dog. His praise of his faithful four-legged friend kept the Knesset fascinated during the reading of a bill by MK Avraham Poraz (Shinui-Meretz), which would prevent the Executions Office from confiscating an animal from an owner who has unpaid debts.

The bill, drawn up after a dog was taken from its owners in Nabariya last year because of an NIS 3,000 debt, passed preliminary reading.

Poraz also submitted a bill yesterday proposing the hunters' license fee be significantly raised to NIS 10,000 annually to reduce the number of hunters. All hunters require a license by law. Currently the cost is NIS 927 a year.

"The bill is based on the understanding that hunting is immoral, ugly and invalid and goes against the principles of Jewish law," he said. "It should be restricted as much as possible. An enlightened country should try to cut to a minimum the killing of animals for pleasure."

Ban on old planes

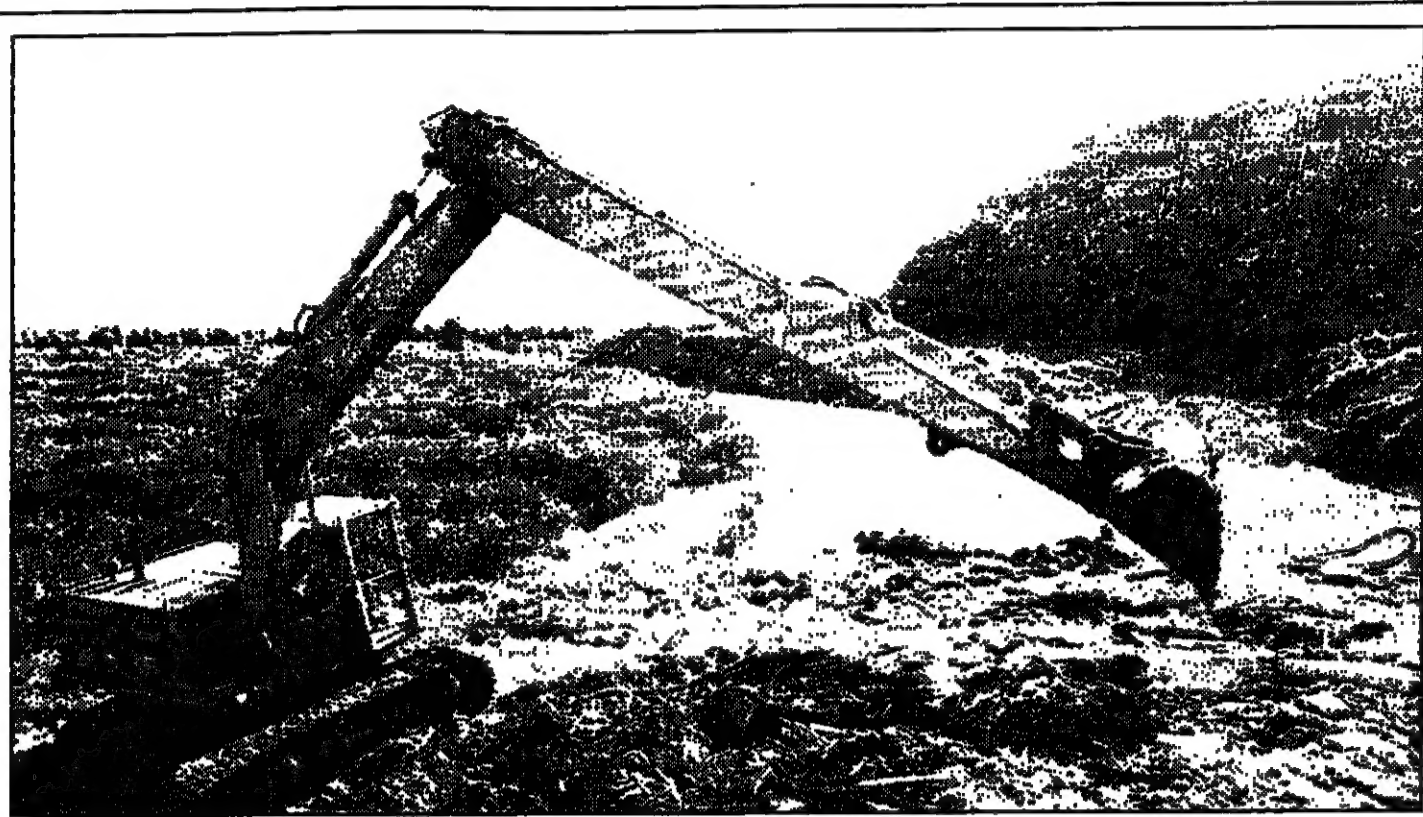
Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy announced yesterday that Israel has banned old planes from the former Soviet Union from landing at airports here because of safety problems. The planes which were banned do not meet the safety requirements of the international and local civil aviation authorities, he said.

Election of Babel

Under a bill which passed preliminary reading yesterday, parties will be able to print their names in Russian and Amharic on ballot slips.

The bill was proposed by MK Zvi Weinberg (Yisrael Ba'Aliya) and passed 19-3.

Weinberg is also proposing that the information material issued by the Central Elections Committee also be printed in Amharic and Russian.



A crane at work by the Hirya dump clears away garbage clogging the Ayalon River.

(Ilan Otsendryver/Israel Sun)

Eitan determined to divert Ayalon from Hiria

Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan yesterday instructed work to commence immediately to unblock the Ayalon river from garbage that slid into it from the Hirya dump, west of Ben Gurion Airport. A new channel will be cut for the river to divert it from running so close to the vast mound of garbage.

Four large bulldozers are working to change the water's course, according to the

Ayalon drainage manager Zeev Landau.

Eitan yesterday expressed anger at the government for failing to heed a warning he gave a month ago about the hazard posed by the garbage dump to the river and a request for NIS 7 million to correct the problem. He said he had been forced to start the work without the extra budget.

Hiria has also been the source of a controversy over birds that feed in the area. Given

the site's proximity to the airport, aviation authorities have called for the dump's closure amid fears that the birds could cause a serious air accident.

Another controversy arose over the diversion project yesterday when the Antiquities Authority urged that any digging in the Hirya area be done under their supervision for fear of harming the presumed site of ancient Bnai Brak, underground.

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הנהלת המכירות

Journalist conference debates pluralism

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

A frequently impassioned panel discussion at yesterday's session of the International Conference of the Jewish Media in Jerusalem gave participants a sense of the fierce debate over the conversion bill.

Both Jewish Agency Chairman Avraham Burg and MK Alex Lubotsky (Third Way), who has been active in the work of the Neeman Committee, sounded upbeat on the possibility of reaching a compromise. However, Masorti Movement spokesman Anat Rimon rejected Lubotsky's calls for her movement to give in to the Orthodox on matters of Halacha. Ha'aretz journalist David Landau castigated the Jewish media in the Diaspora for causing serious damage to Israel-Diaspora relations by "constantly harping" on a "red herring issue."

"There is no doubt in my eyes that the number one topic which has, God forbid, the potential for civil war within Israeli society is the issue of church and state, between Knesset and beit ha'neset (synagogue), between observant and non-observant, between ultra-Orthodox and Zionist," Burg said. He noted that the average Israeli supported a very traditional society in terms of ritual, but also freedom of choice in religious observance.

"We have to navigate between these two psyches when we want to discuss the tense issue of church and state in Israel," he said.

Lubotsky said the Neeman Committee's work was at a crucial point. "If we succeed, I think it will be a real breakthrough for the Jewish people, and a real breakthrough after 200 years of bitter fighting between the different streams in Judaism.... On the other



David Haguel (left), head of the World Zionist Information Department, speaks with (from left) Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav, Debra Rubin, managing editor of the 'New Jewish News,' Marc Klein, publisher of the 'Jewish Bulletin of Northern California,' and Jacob Gispas, vice chairman of the Jewish media conference, before a press conference yesterday in Jerusalem. (Joe Malcom)

hand, if we fail, I think it will be a huge tragedy for the Jewish people and the state."

Lubotsky, an Orthodox Jew, said "it will make Israel more Jewish if we have more pluralism." Using his background as a math professor, Lubotsky said he had come to a formula for compromise in the dispute "in which on every issue which is a question of Halacha, the Conservative and Reform would

yield to the Orthodox, while on every issue which is a question of involvement, recognition and legitimacy, the Orthodox will give up to the Conservative and Reform."

However, Ramon rejected Lubotsky's arguments.

"We have our own interpretation of Jewish law. We can't give that up. There's a serious debate about how you treat women and converts, a sharp debate between us

and the Orthodox. And what we need is not recognition from the Orthodox. I don't care if an Orthodox rabbi says I'm a rabbi or not. I couldn't care less. What I care about is that I will have exactly the same kind of conditions that the Orthodox rabbi have to serve the Israeli public. That's what I'm fighting for. And I will not compromise for less than that."

Landau sounded the alarm about

the dangers of Diaspora Jews and opinion-makers "harping on this issue, hyping this subject which goes by the name of pluralism, to the point - and we're now very close to that point - that the Diaspora that you represent and to whom you write and broadcast, and the Israel of which I am a part are in danger of falling into schism, a deep, lasting and perhaps irreparable division."

Latin patriarch: Society puts limitation on free choice

By HAIM SHAPIRO

Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah yesterday set forth a model of religious freedom in the Middle East in which Jew, Christian and Muslim were all free to be what they were, but not free to believe differently from the beliefs of their ancestors and people.

"The religious choice in the East is not only a personal choice. It is also a social choice, and the society, in view of the public order, puts limitation on personal free choice," Sabbah said in Jerusalem at an international conference on Pluralism and Religious Liberty, sponsored by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty.

In this context, he continued, con-

version has acquired the negative sense of passing over to the other party, implying a sense of aggression on the identity of the group, while, on the other hand, one can be an unbeliever and still belong to the religious group.

It was this view, he said, which colored relations between Arab Christians and Muslims in Arab states. Those states were still grappling with the solution to the question of absolute equality between Christians and Muslims.

However, speaking at the same conference, Father David Jaeger, a Catholic legal expert involved in the fundamental agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel, said the Catholic negotiators had specifically rejected any

mention of the historic system in which individuals were classified according to religious affiliation.

In keeping with Catholic teaching, as formulated in Vatican II, it prefers a view of absolute religious freedom, he said.

Jaeger quoted an address by Pope John Paul II calling for a transition throughout the Middle East from a past model of "protection" for Christian communities to relations based on the rigorous observance of universal freedom of religion and conscience.

While admitting that in the past the Church had made concordats with authoritarian states, it now believed that the Church could not be free where freedom of religion and conscience were not guaranteed to all.

New committee seeks amnesty for common criminals

By HELEN KAYE

A newly formed citizens' committee has mounted a campaign for a 50th anniversary amnesty to be granted to inmates sentenced for drug and debt-related offenses, spokesmen said yesterday.

The Citizens' Committee for Amnesty committee will not seek

pardon for anyone convicted of major felonies such as murder or rape, a news conference was told.

"We are not political and our efforts cut across racial and ethnic lines," former MK Charlie Biton said. "But it cannot be denied that the vast majority of prisoners in Israeli jails belong to the Sephardic population."

Major efforts are being directed at winning freedom for those jailed for drug-related offenses. According to committee member Cohavi Shemesh, 77% of prisoners "are drug addicts who should be in rehabilitation programs and not behind bars, and 66% require treatment."

Veteran Black Panther member Reuven Abergil argued that many Sephardim in jail for drug-related crimes grew up in circumstances

of economic and social deprivation, as did many Israeli Arabs who account for 50% of prison drug addicts.

Shemesh said the committee was formed out of concern that the amnesty proposed by Jubilee Committee Chairman Yitzhak Moda'i would apply mainly to white-collar criminals, rather than "the real unfortunate prisoners whose crime is based on social circumstance."

Posters are being advertised and a Knesset lobby will try to focus awareness on the issue to obtain quick passage of a law to pardon minor offenders.

A series of five advertisements will feature a poster that says: "Israel, will you not ask peace for your prisoners?"

Knesset support for the effort cuts across party lines. Backers include former Speaker Shevah Weiss (Labor), Finance Committee Chairman Avraham Ravitz (Degel Hatorah), Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, and MK Reuven Rivlin (Likud). Other supporters include actor/director Amos Zadok and director David Ben-Shur.

MKs upset at lack of info on long-school day

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

The Knesset Education Committee yesterday gave the Education Ministry's plans for launching the long school day low grades.

Committee members were angered by the fact that Education Ministry Director-General Benzion Dell failed to show up for the meeting and that detailed information about the program, scheduled to be launched in 100 communities on January 1, was not prepared in time for yesterday's meeting.

"The director-general was supposed to be here," said an angry MK Reuven Rivlin (Likud). "If the situation doesn't change, there won't be any reason to invite ministry representatives to the committee's meetings."

MK Dalia Itzik (Labor) said it was "scandalous" that material about the program was not prepared on time. "We're tired of always hearing promises. We get

the impression that the ministry is not prepared for the program to be launched on January 1, and if this is so it must tell the parents, teachers and pupils slated to be included in the program. And if the ministry has plans, they should bring it to us before January 1."

Itzik Cohen, chairman of the ministry's Pedagogic Authority, said the ministry was prepared for the long school day, but did not plan on providing special study plans for it. "The ministry gave the schools approval to increase hours and every school will decide based on its needs how to fill these hours. We believe in the schools' ability to build the best programs for themselves."

Histadrut Teachers Union Secretary-General Avraham Ben-Shabbat disagreed, however, and said "the success of the long school day also depends on an organized plan and proper use of the teachers."

National Parents Association Chairman Shai Lachman also

sounded doubtful, saying preparations for the program are "limping along. I don't think the long school day will get off on the right foot."

Meanwhile, the Secondary School Teachers Association reintroduced sanctions at high schools and some junior high schools yesterday as part of its continuing fight for proper payment for teachers accompanying pupils on trips and cultural activities after regular school hours. The dispute is also over principals' wages. On Tuesday, the Histadrut Teachers Union launched sanctions of its own.

The association teachers are not accompanying high school and junior high school pupils on trips and are not allowing any school cultural activities outside regular hours. Principals are not cooperating with the ministry on pedagogic and administrative matters, and principals and teachers are not cooperating with inspectors, counselors and ministry representatives.

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NEWS

in brief

Israel Museum gets \$42 million

The Israel Museum has received a \$42 million gift from the late Caroline and Joseph Gruss of New York for construction of a new facility for visitor resources. In acknowledgement of what is one of the largest gifts ever made to an art museum, the government is contributing an additional \$8m. toward the project. The new building, to be constructed at the entrance to the museum campus, will serve as a gateway to the museum and its sculpture garden. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

3 injured when plane makes emergency landing

A pilot and two passengers were slightly injured yesterday when a light plane was forced to make an emergency landing. Shortly after taking off from Herzliya airport, the front window of the plane cracked and pilot Oded Levy landed it by the Kfar Nahman youth village in Ra'anana. He and two passengers, Ehud Be'er and Yotam Shabbai, were taken to hospital, but were expected to be released soon. *Itim*

Tiberias yeshiva agrees to move

An agreement apparently has been reached between the Dehan family of Tiberias and a yeshiva which moved in next door to them. The yeshiva has agreed to move, but Kachava Dehan said she had doubts the yeshiva would honor the agreement. According to the agreement reached on Tuesday, Rabbi Dov Kook, husband of the well-known religious exhorter Rabbanit Kook, said he would move if the municipality offered him a place elsewhere. However, Dehan said yesterday that Kook already had sent messengers to say that the family should leave. In the past, students at the yeshiva had attacked Dehan's husband and there were a number of attacks against the family. *Haim Shapiro*

Free entry to Israel Museum for children

Children of both Israelis and tourists will be admitted free to the Israel Museum during Hanukka (December 24-31) thanks to a special fund that William Hechter, of Toronto, set up in memory of his grandmother, Bessie Rose Guberman. *Meir Kornen*

Flower exporters prepare for Christmas rush

Israel is preparing to sell 50 million flowers to Europe in anticipation of Christmas, a statement from the Flower Council said. In order to transport the large shipments, the council is organizing an "air train" of 12 cargo planes. Most of the exports will go to Germany, Holland, the UK and France. Flower sales are expected to total \$1.5 billion in 1997, an 11% increase over last year and a record high for the industry, the statement said. *Jennifer Friedman*

Free distribution of Christmas trees in J'lem

The Municipality of Jerusalem and the Jewish National Fund will distribute free Christmas trees to residents who celebrate the holiday this Monday between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. in the Jaffa Gate Square. Residents are urged to take advantage of the tree handout and not chop down trees in the Jerusalem Forest. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

Ofakim strike continues

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN and Itim

The acrid smoke of burning tires enveloped the development town of Ofakim yesterday as demonstrations continued in front of the municipality for the second day.

The town is striking over the Interior Ministry's demand to fire dozens of its 520 municipal workers, cut the salaries of those remaining, and raise municipal rates by 20 percent. These were set by the ministry as conditions for the approval of a bailout plan to relieve the town's NIS 32 million deficit.

Among the striking municipal workers were many of the town's unemployed. Ofakim's official jobless rate was announced Monday as 14.3 percent, but locals insist the real rate is closer to 20%.

Education Minister Zevulun Hammer yesterday suggested holding the next cabinet meeting in Ofakim and devoting it to a spe-

cial discussion on reducing unemployment. He said the entire cabinet should go to Ofakim to meet with the unemployed people there face-to-face.

"The 150,000 unemployed in Israel expect deeds from us, not condolences," he said.

Hammer also suggested using some of the NIS 8 billion raised this year from privatization of government companies to find work for the unemployed. "The government cannot look unemployed people in the eyes and at the same time continue to count the money made by the state by privatization," he said.

Meanwhile, Education Ministry Director-General Benzion Dell ordered district supervisors in the South and supervisors and principals in Ofakim not to prevent participation of pupils in various activities if their parents have not paid school fees. He told them not to collect money from parents at this time.

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Can El Nino spoil our supper?

The unpredictability of this year's weather might affect an already jittery grain market

By PETER BOHAN

CHICAGO - World grain production in 1998 should further build stockpiles that fell to 20-year lows two years ago, but that outlook could change if the El Nino weather pattern continues playing havoc with crops.

El Nino — a freak flow of unusually warm water into the Pacific Ocean — has toyed with grain traders for months, causing droughts in Australia, India and Indonesia and cutting grain production prospects for China and southern Africa.

If the current El Nino, which began in April 1997, ends as abruptly as it began, grain and oilseed production in the United States could be hit next summer by yield-cutting heat and dryness, some meteorologists say.

That could spell trouble for grain buyers, since the US accounts for 30 percent of world wheat exports and more than half of the exports of coarse grains like corn and barley.

But even if El Nino goes out like a lamb and not a lion, its effects will carry through the year on the supply side.

China's drought-hit coarse grain output is already expected to fall 23 million tonnes. Southern Africa's drought could threaten a new famine, aid officials say.

On the demand side, the financial quake in east Asia will continue rippling through grain markets. The region has been the fastest growing source of grain exports for the US, Canada, Australia and others in this decade.

So if El Nino shrinks supply further, will grain prices stay steady if cash-strapped Asian buyers cut

demand? "I really don't think the factors cancel each other out because they're going to be traded at different time frames," said analyst Steve Freed at ADM Investor Services in Chicago.

"Our belief is that the Pacific Rim problem will last a little bit longer than some people estimate. Weather in 1998 will also be extremely uncertain and volatile due to El Nino. So I think the uncertainty is as much as double this year."

Led by strong wheat production next year, world grain output is expected to rise to a record 1.873 billion tonnes, up seven million tonnes from 1997 and up 163 million tonnes from two years ago, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said in its latest estimates on December 11.

Wheat production was seen rising to 604 million tonnes, up 4% from last year and 12% from two years ago.

Rice output should total 382 million tonnes, against 378 million last year and 371 million two years ago, while output of coarse or "feed" grains — corn, barley, sorghum, rye, oats and millet — was expected to fall two percent at 886 million tonnes. That would still be 11 percent above two years ago.

Overall, world stocks of grain at the end of the current crop year in 1998 were seen edging up to 289 million tonnes, up from 281 million this year and 251 million two years ago.

Growth was also expected in oil seeds — soybeans, oil palm, rape seed and other seeds processed for booming world markets in vegetable oil and animal feed ingredients like soy meal.

Production was seen at a record



279 million tonnes, up 21 million from 1997. Demand should rise 3.6% and stocks would rise almost six percent, according to the USDA report.

But long-time observers of world grain markets caution that despite the projected gains, booming demand growth of 2-3% a year means grain stockpiles remain a key concern.

"I consider it very important that the world has used up the record crop of 1996 and will almost use up the record crop of 1997 despite the Asian financial crisis," said John Schmittner, a private US agriculture analyst.

"Essentially, we're using up everything we produce, even when we produce record crops. So when we produce a less than record crop in some nearby year, I think the dislocation and price impact will be fairly important."

The El Nino phenomenon has bedeviled world grain markets since surface sea temperatures began rising in the Pacific off South America last spring. That effect periodically plays havoc with world weather, prompting heavy rains in some countries and severe droughts elsewhere.

Meteorologist Kevin Marcus of Maryland-based forecaster CROPCAST told a seminar at the Chicago Board of Trade on December 10 that if sea temperatures in the Pacific fell this winter or next spring as quickly as they rose a year earlier, the Corn Belt in the US Midwest was due for a hotter summer than usual.

Others who have studied El Ninos were less convinced. "Our analysis suggests that the El Nino events such as the one we're having will not have a significant effect on US production in 1998," said Rich Poteroff, chief economist with Doane Agricultural Services in Devon, Pennsylvania.

"We don't get into bad crops in the US until we have a La Nina," he said. La Nina is the flip side of El Nino, triggered when the sea temperatures in the Pacific fall below normal levels.

"I don't think there's anybody good enough to even guess on June 1 what our summer weather's going to be, even in a strong year seasonally like this with El Nino," said Freed of ADM Investor Services.

The "Asian flu" that has sent securities, currencies and confidence plummeting from Thailand to South Korea has also shaken export prospects for world grain suppliers.

South Korea, the fourth largest buyer of US farm products, may seek \$1.2 billion in US government credits to keep up that pace. Thailand cancelled a soybean meal purchase this month, and traders fear a fresh "domino effect" of cancellations by Indonesia, Malaysia or other troubled buyers.

"Clearly this thing has got a way to go. There's no sign we're at the bottom or that we've begun the uphill climb," said Poteroff, referring to South Korea. "I believe USDA will offer them quite a bit of export credits," he added.

On the other hand, a big rise in US food aid or grants was seen as unlikely for either east Asia or for Africa if El Nino spawns crop losses or famine there.

"The decline in US support for food aid has gone on for a long time, and I doubt if Congress is going to reverse that," Schmittner said.

Analysts also predicted less significance in world grain trade for another issue that threatened to erupt into trade disputes in 1997 — genetically engineered crops. Rules that require labelling of such crops or products have been proposed in Europe but mandatory segregation of such crops rejected.

Seed genetically altered to resist crop pests or powerful weed killers, like Monsanto's popular Roundup, accounted for 10% of corn, 14% of soybeans and 24% of cotton in the US last year.

(Reuters)

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המלכה אנה לוי

Mbeki takes over as ANC chief

MAFIKENG (Reuters) - Thabo Mbeki, a suave but secretive intellectual, succeeded Nelson Mandela as president of the ruling African National Congress yesterday, taking South Africa on its first step into a new era.

At the same national conference, populist Winnie Madikizela-Mandela declined to try for nomination as his deputy in a race against party favorite Jacob Zuma. Mandela's ex-wife was proposed as a candidate by a follower but, under brand new rules that the ANC denies were aimed at her, would have had to be seconded by a quarter of the 3,064 delegates for her name to go forward.

"To those comrades who nominated my name I apologize for having to decline," said the woman branded a wayward charlatan by party leaders whom she says are promise-breakers to the poor.

Sports Minister Steve Tshwete, a main critic, said her decision was commendable and in the interests of party unity.

Mbeki, who at 55 represents a whole generational change within South Africa's political juggernaut, was nominated unopposed to succeed Mandela, the former political prisoner who led the black majority from apartheid to freedom.

"The message from yourselves to the leadership of the ANC is a very clear one, and that is that the revolution has not been completed," he told delegates who warmly applauded him.

Head of a party that won nearly two-thirds of the vote in the historic all-race elections of 1994, he is virtually certain to become the country's next president after the 1999 poll.

"Thabo Mbeki is already de facto president of the country, I am pushing everything to him," Mandela, 79, said at the weekend. "My stepping down will be very smooth."

Teheran abuzz with US-ties debate

By BARRY MAY

Clinton speech fails to link dialogue to peace process

The comment, delivered as he opened an Islamic summit in Teheran and interpreted as an opening to the United States after 18 years of estrangement between the two former allies, was welcomed in Washington.

Khatami followed up with an explicit overture on Sunday when he said at a Teheran news conference beamed around the world by satellite television that he hoped for "a thoughtful dialogue with the American people" in the near future.

The Shi'ite Muslim clergyman, elected

to the presidency by a landslide last May on a moderate platform, referred more than once to "the great people of the United States."

The latest step in the long-range exchange was a response by US President Bill Clinton at a White House news conference on Tuesday offering an "honest" dialogue with Iran.

Significantly, Clinton did not ask Teheran to drop its opposition to Arab peace accords with the Israelis.

And he spoke of Iran as "a country with

a great history," saying Americans had been greatly enriched by Persian culture.

Clinton, asked about the policy of the United States and its allies, said: "We are all of us discussing how to proceed now."

"No decision has been made. But I have always said, from the beginning, that I thought it was tragic that the United States was separated from the people of Iran."

Gulf analysts said the Iranian government's reaction to US offers of talks had historically been "deeds not words."

"There will be an inexorable push for a

dialogue, but without compromising their stands on issues," one analyst said.

"The people on the street feel that these are good signs and they hope that relations will be normalized with the United States as soon as possible," a Teheran resident said.

"They look forward to a lot of Americans coming here and doing business," he said.

"The Americans have this huge market of 60 million people shut out to them," the diplomat said. "There are giant projects in Iran and the Americans are missing out while the Europeans and others reap the benefits."

Dozens freeze to death in European cold snap

LONDON (Reuters) - Ice and snow gripped much of Europe yesterday as the death toll from a vicious cold snap climbed to around 50.

Three people froze to death overnight in Moscow, where temperatures this week have plunged as low as -28.8 Celsius, the coldest mid-December for many decades.

Nine others have died on the capital's streets in recent days and 13 have perished in fires as they tried to heat their apartments. Another man died overnight in Yeisk in the southern region of Krasnodar.

Fifteen people have died from the cold in Poland as temperatures have plummeted to around -20 Celsius.

"The victims are mainly homeless...and those who drank too much alcohol," Warsaw police spokesman Pawel Biedziak said.

Seven frozen corpses were collected from the streets of the Romanian capital on Tuesday.

"We expect the number of dead to rise in the coming days due to the bad weather," said Vladimir Belis, head of Bucharest's Forensic Institute.

Rough seas, low visibility and high winds closed Romanian Black

Sea ports and trapped two US warships taking part in a naval exercise. Power was cut to some 250 villages in the south and east of the country.

Motoring organizations across Europe pleaded with drivers to leave their cars at home to prevent further loss of life from the biting cold and ice. Radio reports described roads in Luxembourg as "veritable skating rinks."

In London, the government was moving homeless youths into one of the capital's grandest buildings, Admiralty Arch on Trafalgar Square.

The 60 youngsters, who normally sleep rough on the streets, will be allowed to stay until March in the former naval headquarters, which enjoys views of Buckingham Palace.

Overnight snowfalls in southern England forced some schools to close and made the morning journey to work a misery for millions.

"It's an absolute nightmare," said a spokesman for the Automobile Association.

In Spain, where two fatal road accidents were blamed on the weather on Tuesday, authorities issued warnings of heavy rain, high winds and possible floods.



Korea goes to the polls

Supporters of South Korean presidential candidate Kim Dae-jung wave campaign signs during a political rally yesterday in Seoul. Six million people - or 20 percent of the 33 million eligible voters - told pollsters they would head for today's polls undecided. (AP)

Bushfire smoke blankets Sydney

SYDNEY (Reuters) - Thick smoke and soot blanketed Sydney yesterday and firefighters were placed on alert as high temperatures and strong winds fanned bushfires burning in four states across Australia.

A smoke haze descended on Sydney shortly after midday as firefighters battled to control several outbreaks near the Blue Mountains on the city's western outskirts.

"Firefighters are preparing for an extremely difficult afternoon in the face of increasing temperatures, strong winds and very low humidity," the New South Wales Rural Fire Service (RFS) said in a statement.

Police said about 20 families had been evacuated from Nattai, 50 kilometers southwest of Sydney, as one of several fires burning in a nearby national park approached the township.

An RFS spokesman said firefighters had been withdrawn from another fire in the Wollondilly area further to the southwest of Nattai to protect the township of Yerranderrrie.

Eleven fires were burning in New South Wales and had burnt out a million dunams (250,000 acres) of land, the spokesman said. Over 6 million dunams had been burnt out in the past three weeks.

Other fires were burning in the Hawkesbury region immediately north of Sydney and in the Hunter Valley about 130 kms. to the north.

Some fires to Sydney's south, north and northwest have been burning for over two weeks and officials fear a return to conditions at the start of December when over 400 fires burned across Australia's eastern seaboard.

Three firemen died fighting those fires, which destroyed a dozen homes in Sydney and blanketed the city in grey smog.

On the other side of the continent in Western Australia, where two people died and five were seriously injured in huge blazes on Monday, fires were still burning on 270,000 dunams of heavily wooded areas of the state.

Stock losses were also heavy in Western Australia, with over 10,000 sheep burned in fires south of Perth.

"I saw thousands of sheep that were just standing rigid, burnt to a cinder and they were standing on their feet," wheat farmer Colin Mills told reporters on Tuesday.

A spokesman for the Australian Wheat Board said yesterday wheat losses in the Western Australia fires would be insignificant.

Television cartoon illness mystifies Japan

TOKYO (Reuters) - A Japanese television network yesterday called in doctors, psychologists, and animation experts to find out why a cartoon based on the video game "Pocket Monsters" triggered convulsions among hundreds of children nationwide.

TV Tokyo programming division manager Hironari Mori told reporters more than 700 persons, mainly schoolchildren, were rushed to hospitals after watching the program on Tuesday night.

The Home Affairs Ministry said 208 people, aged from three upwards, including a man aged 58, were still in hospital with epilepsy-type symptoms more than 24 hours after the showing.

"We are investigating the cause of the incident using outside experts," Mori said.

The seizures began about 20 minutes into the 30-minute program, which airs on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

The blame was put on a scene depicting an explosion followed by five seconds of flashing red lights from the eyes of the most popular character, "Pikachu," a rat-like creature.

The episode featured characters entering a computer to fight each other. The explosion was set off by a "vaccine bomb" detonated to destroy a computer virus.

Even Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro

Hashimoto was drawn into the national debate, which dominated news headlines through the day.

Commenting on the cartoon's fascination with ray guns and laser beams, Hashimoto said their portrayal should be carefully considered because they were "weapons."

"Their effects (on viewers) have not been fully determined," he said.

Mori said the offending section passed inspection before broadcast, but in hindsight, "We believe there may have been problems with presentation and production technique."

TV Tokyo imposed a health warning on future episodes, telling viewers that watching Tuesday's installment of *Pocket Monsters* could cause fainting and nausea.

"I must say that as an adult that part made me blink, so for a child the effect must have been considerable," Mori said.

Other TV networks said they were studying their cartoons to see if they posed a similar risk of *Pocket Monsters* sickness.

The cartoon, shown since April, is the highest-rated program in its time slot. The network plans to cancel next week's show if the cause of the incident remains unclear. Some local affiliates have already shelved the next episode.

Japan's largest video rental chain, Culture Convenience Club Co. Ltd., announced it was taking *Pocket Monsters* videos off shelves at its 940 stores nationwide.

The Posts and Telecommunications Ministry, which supervises TV stations, announced it also was investigating.

A spokesman for Nintendo, whose shares lost about 2 percent, said the characters were the only link between its game and the cartoon. He also pointed out the game is only in black and white, not color.

The game has been a huge success, selling seven million units since it was released in Japan in February 1996. The game is scheduled to be released in the rest of the world next year.

Doctors said children went into a trance-like state, similar to hypnosis, complaining of shortness of breath, nausea, and bad vision when the rat-like creature's eyes flashed.

Other children were stricken when they watched TV replays of the offending scene in news reports on the earlier victims.

Dr. Yukio Fukuyama, an expert on juvenile epilepsy, said bright flashes of light and color from a television screen could trigger a phenomenon known as "television epilepsy."

Doctors have known that children are susceptible to such seizures since even before the dawn of television, but it has become more evident with the spread of TV, Fukuyama said.

He said the seizures, albeit unpleasant, are not dangerous and that spontaneous recovery is the norm.

But parents should be aware of possible side effects of watching programs featuring bright flashing lights.

"The networks should definitely think of issuing a health warning beforehand," Fukuyama said.

Psychologist Rika Kayama said the phenomenon appeared to be an epileptic effect induced by flashing light, known as photosensitive epilepsy or group hysterics.

"The children must have been totally immersed in the program," said Kayama, author of a book on video games.

Doctors at the University of Tokyo Hospital, where four children were hospitalized, said patients seemed to have been affected by glaring light that stimulated their nerve cells.

One child did not remember watching the cartoon. Mori said the network is considering compensation for the families.

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Vienna's latest waltz

Austria mulls biting the NATO bullet

By PAUL CARREL

VIENNA, Dec. 14 - Austrians are fast approaching a self-imposed deadline to decide whether they should surrender their cherished political neutrality and join NATO.

In what could prove to be one of the most radical moves in post-war Austrian politics, the Social Democrat and Conservative coalition partners have given themselves until the end of March to sort out their differences and make a decision.

Joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization would represent a dramatic change in the national mind set of half a century.

"Neutrality has been a defining element of the Austrian identity since 1955," said Edward Foster of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies in London. "It's one of the things that make them not German."

Like Germany, Austria was occupied by Soviet, British, US and French troops after World War II. While West Germany subsequently joined NATO, neutrality was enshrined in Austria's constitution as a condition of the Soviet withdrawal in 1955.

Now a combination of political interests, international pressures, rising defence costs and shifting popular opinion could prompt the government to jump off the ideological fence and sign up to the West's security alliance.

Conservative Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schuessel, who heads the junior coalition partner the People's Party, is the leading advocate of joining NATO.

"The time is ripe for fully justified membership of NATO," he said earlier this year. "We want to seize the opportunity — before 1999." Conservative President Thomas Klestil, seeking re-election next spring, has warned of

"fatal consequences" for Austria if it stays out of the alliance.

But Chancellor Viktor Klima, whose Social Democrats are the senior coalition partner, has been more guarded.

The Social Democrats are officially against abandoning neutrality, and Klima says Austria would always be welcomed into NATO and must not be rushed into signing up.

Nevertheless, he did agree to the March 1998 deadline for making a decision.

Setting the deadline was intended partly to put an end to cross-party bickering within the grand coalition which could play into the hands of Joerg Haider's far-right Freedom Party, the main opposition group, which also favors NATO membership.

"Neutrality was important historically, but today it is out of date," says Herbert Scheibner, defence spokesman for the Freedom Party. "Delaying the decision will only do Austria political and financial damage."

Klima, whose party says a referendum should be held before a final decision is made, is keen to have an agreed Austrian position before the country takes over the European Union presidency in July 1998, political analysts say.

"NATO membership is linked to the question of European defence. For image reasons, it looks a lot better if the issue is resolved before then," said Hans-Georg Heinrich, director of the Institute for Political Science in Vienna.

On joining the EU in January 1995, Austria gained observer status in the Western European Union, a loose 28-nation defence grouping linked to the EU. Schuessel's conservatives argue that NATO membership is a logical next step.

"The EU and NATO are complementary expressions of the same community of values and



Austrian soldiers in 1988 ceremony. After more than half a century of neutrality, Vienna's prospective joining of NATO would be one off the most radical changes in postwar Austria. (AP)

solidarity," Schuessel said this year.

He argues that NATO membership would also make Austria's national defence more efficient and cost-effective.

Opponents of NATO membership say neutrality helped to give this Alpine nation of eight million people a higher international profile than it would otherwise have enjoyed.

Vienna hosts the United Nations third headquarters, alongside New York and Geneva, and is home to several other bodies including the International

Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Supporters of neutrality also argue that NATO membership could be expensive, even though Austria's military equipment is already broadly compatible with that used by the alliance.

They put the cost of membership at between 4.0 billion and 20 billion schillings (\$322 million - 1.6 billion), potentially doubling the 1996 defence budget of 21 billion schillings, which represented 0.83 percent of gross domestic product.

The fact that even former

Warsaw Pact countries — Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic — look set to join the western alliance in 1999 has intensified the debate.

"Neutrality is a slightly outmoded concept," says Timothy Gaden, director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London. "Who are you neutral about? NATO is a pretty neutral organization itself these days."

Political analysts say the March deadline may pass with no firm decision either way but with a typically Austrian policy fudge. "They might adopt another time

horizon and say something like: 'Austria plans to integrate into European defence by such and such a time and neutrality will have to be redefined,'" said Heinrich.

Some opinion polls show as many as 70% of Austrians are in favor of neutrality, but others put the figure significantly lower and suggest that most believe the country will inevitably sign up to NATO.

Heinrich believes that public opinion is shifting toward majority support for NATO membership as neutrality becomes something of a non-issue in an increasingly

integrated Europe. Money, rather than grand political theory, may ultimately determine the outcome.

Maintaining an independent air force capable of defending Austrian airspace is proving costly, and many air force pilots are being lured away by commercial airlines.

"Austrians may therefore conclude that they will get better security and value for money by taking shelter under the NATO umbrella."

"I think we will eventually join," one senior government official said. (Reuters)

An Arab problem called Afghanistan

By MONA ELTAHAWY

CAIRO - When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, Egypt's then-president Anwar Sadat exhorted Egyptians to help Afghan guerrillas fight communist troops.

Other Arab volunteers also raced to join the *mujahideen* (holy warriors) and became known as Arab Afghans.

Now, many years later, Arab Afghans are a thorn in the side of Sadat's successor Hosni Mubarak and other Arab leaders, who blame them for Muslim militant violence in the region.

Mubarak linked last month's massacre of 58 foreign tourists in Luxor to Egyptian Islamists still said to use Afghanistan as a base, and others who have taken refuge in Europe.

"The Egyptian government was

very wrong in allowing these numbers to go to Afghanistan," said Hussein Amin, Egypt's former ambassador to Algeria.

"The government hoped they could rid Afghanistan of the Soviets, maybe because America supported this movement and the volunteers. It wasn't hidden and the government approved. But it let the genie out of the bottle."

When the last Soviet soldier left Afghanistan in 1989, many Arab Afghans went home, buoyed by an Islamic zeal they believed had helped them vanquish a superpower — and which they then turned on governments from Egypt to Algeria to Saudi Arabia.

"Their return coincided with a stage when the Islamic movement began to be more radical and more violent," said Diaa Rachwan of the Ahran Center for Political and

Strategic Studies.

MILITANTS STRUCK at the center of power in Egypt as early as 1981 when soldiers led by Khaled Islambouli assassinated Sadat.

Islambouli was hanged and many militants were jailed. But violence surged in the late 1980s and again in 1992 when police, officials, Christians and tourists became Islamist targets.

Some Arab Afghans were accused of being directly involved. In 1992, a military court sentenced to death eight militants, seven of them on the run, for plotting to overthrow the government in a case known as "Returnees from Afghanistan."

They included the brother of Sadat's assassin, Mohammed Ahmed Shawqi Islambouli. He was listed by Egypt's State Information Service in a catalogue issued this

month of 14 leading militants said to mastermind "terrorism" from abroad.

Egyptian security officials believe Afghanistan is home to Mustafa Hamza, accused of plotting the attempted assassination of Mubarak by Egyptian militants in Addis Ababa in 1995.

"Some of these people who went [to Afghanistan] were either members or sympathizers of the violent Islamic movement in Egypt," Rachwan said.

"They had a prior belief that the Egyptian state was an infidel state and that an Islamic state must be set up. Afghanistan didn't add anything to their ideas, maybe it added training," he said.

THE US Central Intelligence Agency trained the *mujahideen* and their Arab brothers in arms while

Saudi Arabia funded them, ignoring their radical ideology.

Experts and diplomats estimate that about 2,000 Saudis fought in Afghanistan for periods of up to three years. Three of the four men executed for a car bombing in Riyadh that killed five Americans and two Indians in 1995 were Afghan war veterans.

Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden is believed to be the main financier and commander of the Arab Afghans. He was forced to return to Afghanistan from Sudan last year, under Saudi pressure.

US officials last year branded him the prime suspect in the Riyadh car bombing and a 1996 bombing in eastern Saudi Arabia, which killed 26 Americans.

Bin Laden, stripped of Saudi citizenship for his activities against the royal family, has denied involve-

ment in the bombings but has threatened a holy war on US troops in Saudi Arabia.

The kingdom's neighbor Yemen played a role in the Arab Afghan network, as a transit point for militants. Yemen said last year it had deported most of the militants and assured Arab states it would not let them use its territory.

Egypt has often complained that its southern neighbor, Sudan, also served as a haven for militants, including Arab Afghans. Sudan's Islamist government denies the charge.

Pedagogy the Arab Afghans' bloodiest imprint has been in Algeria, where more than 65,000 people are estimated to have been killed in violence since early 1992, when the authorities cancelled a general election which Islamists were winning. Diplomats say about 900 sa-

soned Algerian fighters returned from Afghanistan in three waves between 1992 and 1994, to form the hard core of Algeria's Muslim guerrillas.

But Rachwan believes Arab governments too easily blame the Arab Afghans for violence now carried out by younger militants.

"The Arab Afghans are heroes and role models who give out general instructions. But court rulings in Egypt indicate that in only a few cases were they behind money and training."

"Egypt is looking for a reason and an actor. It is true there is no state in Afghanistan, there is no control; there are possibilities to enter and leave, but Afghanistan is far away and there is little infrastructure," Rachwan said. "You can't find a telephone there in the street to make a call." (Reuters)

AGENDA

Continued from Page 1

During the Likud faction meeting, MKs Ze'ev Begin, Ruby Rivlin, and Uzi Landau pressed Netanyahu to discuss the extent of the concessions he is planning.

With a chivalrous gesture, he turned to Levy and suggested that he respond. Levy refused, merely saying he will demand a significant redeployment and that he agrees with Begin's statement that it would be preferable not to present any maps at the meeting.

Judging by the faction meeting, it should be quite simple to write the script for the meeting with Albritt this morning. In media jargon, the script would be called a "pilot."

After the faction meeting, some of Netanyahu's close friends (he still has a few) approached him.

"We don't envy you, The Americans are just waiting to trip you up, the Right is trying to run rings around you and Labor is breathing down your neck," they whispered in his ear.

Netanyahu, who was still suffering from the effect of the reports about his wife in the weekend press, replied with a smile: "Believe me, the goyim don't frighten me. The Jews don't frighten me. I'm only afraid of Jewesses!"

Was he referring to Albritt?

Provisional prime minister

On Sunday I asked several senior American aides to assess Netanyahu's chances of getting the second redeployment and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai's censored version of

the map outlining the state's security considerations through the government.

"We are working on the assumption that Netanyahu will be able to hang on and push the necessary decisions for advancing the peace process through the cabinet," the Americans said. "We therefore recognize his need to drag out the discussions until after the budget has been approved."

On Monday I paid a condolence visit to a friend in Ramallah who is one of Arafat's closest advisors. Saeb Erekat, head of the Palestinian negotiating team, happened to be there at the same time.

"Do you really think that Netanyahu is capable of pushing through the decision on the major redeployment and surviving?" I asked him.

"Netanyahu has more lives than a cat," Erekat replied unhesitatingly. "If he survived the Bar-On Affair without shaking the dust off his jacket, and managed to overcome the Mashaal Affair without so much as batting an eyelid, then the redeployment is small fry for him. We are working on the assumption that he will hold out until the year 2000 at least, if not up to 2004."

"Look," Erekat said, "our problem with Netanyahu has nothing to do with the stability of his government. In the past, we had a basic understanding of the objectives of the Labor Party."

"The problem with Netanyahu's government is that we don't know what they want."

On Tuesday, Beit El council head Uri Ariel, Amarna director-general Ze'ev Hever, and Pinhas Wallerstein, chairman of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, announced their intention to bring

down Netanyahu. They have a great deal of influence in the settlements and carry considerable weight in the National Religious Party. The problem with them is not just that they have a large budget for publishing notices, they also have bulldozers. During former secretary of state James Baker's attempt at shuttle diplomacy in this region, they exploited these resources by starting a new settlement every he time paid us a visit. This made then-president George Bush mad and is likely to drive Albritt insane.

This is just one of the first signs of cracks in the coalition. Two ministers from two different parties described Netanyahu in the following terms: "He's great on small issues. But when it comes to anything important, he's nowhere to be found. Not a single serious issue has been discussed seriously. Not the changes which Israel must make in order to retain its powers of deterrence in the face of developments in the Middle East. Not Israel's relations with the Diaspora. Not Israel's Arab population."

"He is mainly concerned with how to make National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon act against the settlers, and how to exploit the Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman so as to wind world Jewry round his little finger. There is no alternative; he must be replaced."

Last week, Labor MK Haim Ramon put out feelers to several ideological right-wingers in order to examine the chances of bringing down the government. He spoke to Begin, who informed him he had decided to vote against the budget as soon as he discovered that Netanyahu had told the

Americans he intends to back Mordechai's map and make a two-figure redeployment. Ramon also spoke to Moshe MK Benny Elon about cooperating to bring down the government and forming a national-unity government led by Labor Chairman Ehud Barak.

If we attempt to tie all these loose ends together, it appears that the hard core of Netanyahu's opposition will operate as follows: A) In the next few days the settlers will breach the peace and take their bulldozers out onto the hilltops in order to shake up the system.

B) The Labor Party will announce that if it wins the elections it will be prepared to set up a national-unity government along the following lines: Israel will annex 10% of the area adjoining the green line on which most of the settlements are located; 30% of the territories (the Jordan Valley and security zones) will become part of Zone C on a permanent basis, meaning for at least 10 years, until the issue is reviewed.

C) The right-wingers and those disappointed with Netanyahu will give him his final warning by voting against the budget. Not for social reasons, but for political reasons.

In this situation Netanyahu would not necessarily be ousted and by law could keep going for another three months, receiving a down payment each month based on one-twelfth of the previous budget. However, this would mean that his hold on the premiership is shaky, not just in the eyes of Begin and Likud MK Dan Meridor, but also in those of the NRP, Tsomet and Sharon.

Albritt should take particular note of this.

Left hand, right hand

Last week the Pentagon representative on the American peace team, Gen. Fogelson, arrived in Israel to study Israel's demands for security zones.

Right hand — several ministers were contacted by the Prime Minister's Office and meetings arranged for them with Fogelson so he could learn their views.

Left hand — On the eve of the meetings, the Prime Minister's Office contacted the ministers informing them that Fogelson had refused to meet any civilians and that meetings would therefore only be held with the military. However, American sources stated the meetings with the ministers were canceled at Netanyahu's instruction; he preferred that the meetings be held solely on a professional basis.

Right hand — several weeks ago Sharon was sent to the White House to present the maps showing Israeli interests to the head of the National Security Council, Sandy Berger.

Left hand — immediately afterward, Netanyahu's aides informed the White House that Sharon's maps had not been endorsed by the Israeli government.

However, the story which best illustrates Netanyahu's wavering this week is the story of the Jewish Agency elections. After deliberations which lasted for more than a year, the prime minister notified Salim Meridor that he would be his candidate, following an unprecedented rotation agreement with the Labor Party.

Everyone is in agreement that Salim Meridor, one of the leading members of former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir's negotiating team, is a talented candidate — but

that Netanyahu's last-minute endorsement of his candidacy is reminiscent of Elyakim Rubenstein's appointment as attorney-general, following the Bar-On fiasco.

Last week, Meridor left for Chicago and received the unanimous support of the UJA leaders (the American Jews) who must approve his candidacy after he presented a detailed recovery program for the Jewish Agency.

Worth noting

There is disagreement in the defense establishments in both Israel and the US over the wisdom behind the attempts to reach a prior understanding with the US. Some Israeli officials objected to this, because they believe that any prior agreement on maps and red lines with the US administration would quickly become Israel's starting position. Meanwhile, some of the American officials oppose such a move because they believe that any secret, early understanding with Israel immediately becomes common knowledge, as everything in Jerusalem is leaked to the press.

However, in the past both sides have agreed that there is room to discuss "covert understandings" if these could be decided upon via a completely secret pipeline.

No one understands what sense there is in publicly presenting minimalist maps of the final-status proposal before negotiations have begun, unless we want to expose our hand from the start. To use American terminology: "The problem with Israel's red line is that it keeps changing color. It starts off red, becomes pink, and then turns green."

SURVEY

Continued from Page 1

The respondents' denominations were determined by asking about their synagogue affiliation. All three movements identified the same three top issues — security, the peace process, and the Orthodox/non-Orthodox conflict — although the rankings differed. Shapiro, who also is one of Mercaz's 38 delegates to the congress, said in an interview this week.

The survey was conducted in August, shortly after the terror attack in Jerusalem's Mahaneh Yehuda, but before the one on Rehov Ben-Yehuda in Jerusalem. In the Conservative movement, the peace process and security tied in first place. For the Reform, the peace process was the main issue by a wide margin, with security in second place. Among the Orthodox respondents, security ranked first, with the peace process in a "distant, but solid, second place," Shapiro said.

The results had a "confidence value" of plus or minus 3.5 points. However, the results were not necessarily representative of the entire Jewish community, as the sample was drawn from Jews who were involved enough in the Jewish community to register to vote in the Zionist election.

Some 111,000 voted in the election. The Association of Reform Zionists of America won 47.7 percent of the vote; Mercaz got 26%. The Religious Zionist (Mizrachi) Movement won 10.8%.

DRIVE CAREFULLY

هذه امن لوت

And Esau was a cunning hunter

THE BIBLE AS IT WAS by James Kugel. Cambridge, Mass., The Belnap Press of Harvard University. 680 pp. \$35.

By Haim Chertok

James Kugel, who divides his professional life between Bar Ilan and Harvard, has a disconcerting habit rare in an academic of such erudition: he consistently produces scholarship of distinction which laymen find of considerable interest. Best known for *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* (1981), Kugel struck a more popular chord a decade later with *On Being a Jew*. He now checks in with *The Bible As It Was*, a highly original Bible companion which, especially for readers accustomed to relying in the first instance upon medieval Jewish commentators to resolve ambiguities or dissolve textual cruces, should be an eye opener, if not invaluable.

Noting that the Bible underwent interpretation virtually from the very start, Kugel reminds us how often later books comment upon, thereby modifying, the sense of earlier ones. The Book of Daniel, for example, reinterprets a reference to 40 years in Jeremiah to 490 years (Daniel 9:2, 4). Biblical interpretation and understanding are in short, both organic and composite in nature, so much so that later expositors themselves could not be fully aware of the extent to which they depended upon a matrix of overlapping commentary.

Kugel makes readily accessible a great mass of ancient biblical interpretation issuing from scores of sources, all of which he seems to have mastered. Organizing these readings by pre-judicial exegeses as a running commentary to the first five books of the Bible, Kugel channels his attention to this initial, highly diversified, but often neglected layer of grappling with biblical texts. Unlike many contemporary expositors, medieval exegetes would have shared fundamental assumptions with those who wrote a millennium or more earlier: 1) the Bible is of its nature a cryptic record, one that requires elucidation; 2) the Bible is relevant, a marvel of instruction for the benefit of mankind; 3) notwithstanding seeming inconsistency, the biblical account is harmonious; 4) it is of divine provenance.

Since I am writing this review during the week of Toledot (Genesis 25-28), how better to illustrate the utility of this volume than to note how it amplifies or contravenes the more familiar interpretations of classical expositors. Genesis

25:27 reads: "And the boys grew and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents." To which Rashi appends: "When they were small, there was no marked difference between them; but when they reached thirteen... Jacob visited the house of study, Esau the idolaus temples." On this verse Kugel refers us to a variant reading from The Book of Jubilees, a pseudepigraphic retelling of Genesis dating from the 2nd century BCE: "And the youths grew, and Jacob learned to write; but Esau did not learn, for he was a man of the field, and a hunter, and he learned war, and all his deeds were fierce. And Abraham loved Jacob, but Isaac loved Esau." Emphasis has shifted from Esau's "cunning" to his "fierce." Compared to Jubilees, Rashi's "idolaus temples" suggests a touch of anachronistic pleading. As for the startling emendation that substitutes Abraham for Rebekkah, Kugel delicately conjectures that its intent was to render Isaac's love for Esau a "sort of consolation prize" to compensate for the favor bestowed upon the younger twin by his saintly grandfather. It certainly casts a different light on the narrative.

And where did Jacob pursue his studies? Whereas Sforzo suggests "the tent of mediation, where he learnt to know his Maker," Rashi indicates the notoriously much-discussed "schools of Shem and Eber," a conceit consonant with one Kugel resurrects from the 1st century CE.

Targum Neophyti: "And Jacob was a man perfect in good work, dwelling in schoolhouses." His curriculum was specified in the 3rd century CE Sifrei Deuteronomy which refers to "the righteous Jacob who observed the entire Torah," to which Kugel adds "the fact that Jacob 'dwelt in tents,' that is, frequented the schoolhouse, was what allowed him 'to observe the entire Torah' since the Torah was the normal schoolhouse curriculum."

A further exemplary passage: Esau's sale of his birthright. Both Rashi and Sforzo hold that rather than the actual price of the birthright, the mess of pottage was merely a symbolic ratifica-

tion of the transaction, a view expressly rejected by Nachmanides. The New Testament Letter to the Hebrews adopts the latter approach: "...that no one be immortal or irreligious like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal." More in accord with the former commentators, however, is a passage from the *Commentary on Genesis* by Ephraim Syrus, a 4th Century CE Christian source: "...after he ate, 'Esau got up and left and [still] despised his birthright.' He did not sell it because of hunger, therefore, but because he indeed considered it to be worthless and sold it for nothing." Far more remarkable is a homiletic interpretation of Philo's cited by Kugel: "The literal meaning shows the greed of the younger in wishing to deprive his elder brother of his rights. But the virtuous man is not greedy... [He] understands that a continuous and unlimited abundance of possessions will provide the wicked man with the occasion for, and the cause of, sin... He considers it most necessary to remove [Esau] from evil... And this does no harm, but is a great benefit to him." Stained, to be sure, but what a brilliant apologetics for Jacob's divinely sanctioned scam.

As for my fellow students in the tents of Shem and Eber, whose bookshelves even now strain under the weight of many volumes which, alas, rarely get feigned, I can virtually guarantee *The Bible As It Was* is one possession which will provide the occasion for great and longlasting enrichment and benefit.



Cover art from 'The Bible As It Was' by James L. Kugel

Recalling the horror of Nanking

By Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan

Through three generations, the tale was passed down. From father to daughter, to daughter again.

Of how Japanese soldiers plundered the city of Nanking in December 1937, killing and torturing more than 300,000 people in less than eight weeks.

Of how they stormed the streets, killing for sport, slashing people into pieces, raping thousands of women and young girls and then mutilating their bodies.

Of how the Yangtze River that snakes past the city literally ran red with blood.

And now, 29-year-old Iris Chang has woven her grandfather's tales of the Nanking massacre into the first English-language book on the topic: *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*.

"Devastatingly researched, it is a stomach-turning, tear-wrenching, thoroughly riveting book - which is exactly what Chang hoped to achieve."

"I feel that I'm fulfilling my family's legacy," Chang said before a recent book signing. "With this book, I can preserve their stories. It's ensuring that they live on." Her book looks beyond the atrocities in Nanking - the former capital of China now known as Nanjing - into the psyche of the Japanese who allowed the massacre to occur, the Europeans and Americans who tried to save the Chinese, and the Japanese denial of the events ever since.

It also includes information from the diary of a German who lived in Nanking at the time, information never before released. John Rabe, whom Chang calls the "Oskar Schindler of China," was a German businessman and leader of the Nazi Party in Nanking when the Japanese invaded. Rabe led a group of Europeans and Americans in establishing a "Safety Zone," which Chang credits with saving almost 300,000 Chinese.

Frederic Wakeman, director of the University of California at

Berkeley's Institute of East Asian Studies, said Rabe's diary sets Chang's book apart from anything that's been written about the massacre in the past.

"This chronicle is absolutely riveting," Wakeman said. "Think about it, here's a Nazi writing about this and even he was shocked. It's one of the most bestial acts of human history."

A journalism graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and 1991 graduate of the Johns Hopkins University's writing seminars program, Chang is also the author of *Thread of the Silk*, the story of the father of the Chinese missile program. She says she decided to write about Nanking because it had been threaded into her psyche since she was a child.

Chang grew up in the university town of Urbana, and her professor parents first told her about the massacre when she was in grade school. Sitting around the dinner table laden with stir-fried vegetables, chicken and rice, her mother, Ying-Ying Chang, would spin tales her father had told her. Especially the one of her own parents' narrow escape, which Chang details in her book.

Chang's maternal grandfather, Chang Tien-Chun, was a poet, journalist and Chinese government official in Nanking. A few weeks before the massacre, he left their family home in a village just outside Nanking to go into the city. When Chinese officials began evacuating the city, he sent word for his wife to meet him at Wuhu, a town on the banks of the Yangtze River, where they could sail to safety. As the Japanese had bombed the railroads, the only route his wife could take was on a boat meandering through a small waterway.

After four long days, boatload after boatload of refugees arrived, but Chang's wife still had not shown up. As the final boat was preparing to leave Wuhu, he screamed his wife's name, "Yi-Pei!" in despair. In the distance, from the last tiny boat approaching

the docks, an answer came. Chang's grandmother had barely made it.

"In that context," Chang says, "it's a miracle I'm alive."

Her mother's tales, told with a quiet voice and quivering anger, instilled in her a deep curiosity to research and report all she could about Nanking.

"I want the rape of Nanking to penetrate the public consciousness," says Chang. "Unless we truly understand how these atrocities can happen, we can't be certain that it won't happen again." One of the first in line at a recent book signing was Dimon Liu, who said her parents also had survived the massacre.

"It's long overdue," said Liu, an independent policy writer in Washington. "I want the Japanese to remember what they've done. I want your younger generations to remember the shame of their forefathers."

Japan's acknowledgment of the terrible events of 1937 have long been a point of contention between China and Japan. Hidehisa Hironouchi, a spokesman for the Embassy of Japan, declined to comment specifically about the book, but said Japanese leaders have acknowledged their atrocities in Nanking.

"We want to face the past history squarely without avoiding the truth," he said.

For her part, Chang says she had no choice but to do just that in writing her book.

"I lost a lot of weight and hair researching the book," she says.

"I couldn't leave [the victims' stories] behind and I had a hard time sleeping at night. There were times when I'd start shaking all over and I felt this tremendous pain inside me." Which is why Ying-Ying Chang has told her daughter to pick a "light topic" for her next book.

"You don't want to dwell on this for so long," her mother said.

"I'm very concerned for her health, but I'm so proud of her." (The Baltimore Sun)

THE SWORD AND THE MIRACLE by Melvyn Bragg. New York, Random House. 541 pp. \$29.95.

By Mary K. Feeley

For anyone interested in medieval Britain and Ireland, Melvyn Bragg's new book is truly an illuminated manuscript. His story of a young Irish named Bega, blessed with the ability to perform miracles, and of a British warrior prince whose life for her is unrequited, will satisfy any student of early British and Irish history.

The Sword and the Miracle is historical fiction set in the seventh century. Though it contains scenes of lust, rape and violence, it is no bodice-ripper. The book, which rose to the top of British bestseller lists, is as much about culture and

Ecfrith, Oswy and Bega

history as it is about its characters.

Sword opens with the story of the Irish princess, Bega, who is given a fragment of the "true cross" of Christ by a wise man named Donal. It was a time of great religious and political conflict; the Celtic religion of the Druids was slowly melding with Christianity. But powerful Christian rulers, including an English king, used the holy word as an excuse to terrorize and plunder those who didn't subscribe to their particular brand of the faith.

Bega is betrothed to one of the warlike O'Neill clan, an advantageous match arranged by her father. She is drawn to Padric, a British prince devoted to saving his

homeland from the savage Northumbrian lords. Her love for Padric, however, is overshadowed by faith.

When O'Neill savagely rapes one of Bega's handmaidens, Bega escapes to a monastery, leaving Padric to defend his country. The book recounts Bega's growing legend, as her spiritual powers extend to miracles such as ending a frightening solar eclipse, and the desperation of her people during four plagues and continuing invasions from the north.

Padric and his brothers, meanwhile, find themselves in the midst of a brutal war ignited when an English king, Oswy, forms a pact

with the Roman pope to annihilate the Celtic Christians and seize their holdings. Later, he must subdue Oswy's ruthless son, King Ecfrith, whose torture and killing spree across Ireland is brutal even by the standards of the times.

Bragg is the star of "The South Bank Show," a program of arts interviews. A native of Britain's Lake Country, Bragg drew his inspiration for *The Sword and the Miracle* from a small church dedicated to St. Bega in Cumbria, near his hometown.

Some characters in the book, including the warlike Prince Ecfrith and the Irish O'Neill clan, are taken from history. Others,

such as the hero Padric, are fictitious; scholars differ on whether the heroine, Bega, was a legend.

Details are what makes this book so memorable. Bragg has the unusual ability to reach back and describe scenes, from battles to banquets, with a natural, unstilted voice. His description of medieval horsemanship is just one example: "All the men had only one hand on the reins, some of which jangled as the wind lifted and rattled the small discs of ornamental metal sewn onto them. There was no saddle, just a blanket, no stirrups; the control came through forearms and thighs." *Sword*, dense with detail and packed with plot, may not be for everyone, but its intelligent recreation of the era has certain appeal for history lovers.

(The Hartford Courant)

BOOK BYTES

Arthur Hailey, author of block-busting novels like *Airport* and *Hotel*, officially retired in 1990. With 160 million books in print in 39 languages, British-born Hailey was looking for the quiet life with his wife Sheila in their home at Lyford in the Bahamas.

It was not to be. In the wake of unfortunate family circumstances, the author took solace in a new book. "All I could do was turn to my word processor and work, work," he said. Hailey's lawyer and best friend, Bruce Verchre, ran off with Hailey's youngest daughter, Diane. After getting Diane pregnant with twins, Verchre returned to his wife and committed suicide. At first the whole affair threatened to rip apart the generations, but the senior Haileys soon "fell in love" with their grandchildren, a boy and a girl.

And as a consequence of the trauma, Hailey completed *Detective* (Doubleday), the novel he never meant to write. The book is loosely built around the life of Steve Vinson, a Miami-based homicide detective. Vinson, who since died, retired early because of a bad heart, and went to live in the Bahamas, where he became a neighbor and friend of the Haileys. He supplied much of the background and information on police work in Hailey's book, maybe his last.

IMOGEN PARKER was one of the hottest young literary agents in London. But she gave up her success in business to write novels. "I just didn't want to be an agent for the rest of my life," says Parker. What I liked was the thrill of discovery. Nearly all my clients came to me as first novelists. I knew I didn't want to still be [an agent] when I was 50." Parker began

writing when she and her husband, a teacher, moved to Madrid. Feeling lonely, she created amateur sleuth Sophie Fitt in her first novel, *A Temporary Affair* (Hamish Hamilton). A second Fitt novel followed as well as the option of a TV series. Changing tracks again, she has now come out with a contemporary women's novel, *More Innocent Times* (Corgi). As for her own representative, Parker left her former company for another. "I thought I needed to find someone who saw me not as an ex-agent but as a writer."

THE STORY of British mystery-thriller writer Emyln Rees, 26, puts a different spin on the writer-agent theme. Rees graduated in English from university and wrote a "semi-autobiographical, non-plot novel." For his trouble he collected a pile of rejection letters.

Rees then joined the Curtis Brown literary agency as an assistant, and wrote a second novel in the thriller genre. Taking a pen name and using a friend's address, he cheekily sent the manuscript to his own office. He was asked to read his own book and give an opinion. "So I read a chapter and said, yeah, it's worth having a look at." *The Book of Dead Authors* (Headline Review) was published in August, and Rees has a contract for a second book. By the way, he kept his day job, and writes every night until 2 a.m.

EYSTEINN BJORNSSON came across a curious title, *Research Symposium on the Male Adolescent Voice* (State University of New York, Buffalo) lurking on the shelves of the University Bookstore in Reykjavik, Iceland. He writes, "I wonder if there was an accompanying cassette."

David Brauner

HARDCOVER Fiction

1. *Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier. (Atlantic Monthly \$24.) A Confederate soldier's journey home to meet an old love.
2. *Car & Mouse* by James Patterson. (Little, Brown \$24.95.) Alex Cross versus two serial killers.
3. *The Ghost* by Danielle Steel. (Delacorte \$25.95.) On a trip to New England, a man finds answers to his problems in an old trunk.
4. *Another City, Not My Own* by Dominick Dunne. (Crown \$25.) The O.J. Simpson murder trial as witnessed by a journalist.
5. *The Letter* by Richard Paul Evans. (Simon & Schuster \$15.95.) In the last volume of the "Christmas Box" trilogy, the Perkins family recovers from the loss of a daughter.
6. *A Certain Justice* by P.D. James. (Knopf \$25.) Adam Dalglish in pursuit of the murderer of a celebrated and widely respected criminal lawyer.
7. *Survival of the Fittest* by Jonathan Kellerman. (Bantam \$24.95.) Alex Delaware pursues the killer of a diplomat's teenage daughter.
8. *Comanche Moon* by Larry McMurtry. (Simon & Schuster \$28.50.) Texas rangers, veterans of "Lonesome Dove," battle defiant Comanches determined to defend their way of life.
9. *Wobegon Boy* by Garrison Keillor. (Viking \$24.95.) After moving to New York, the manager of a radio station comes to terms with his Minnesota heritage.
10. *The Winner* by David Baldacci. (Warner \$25.) The tribulations of a dirt poor woman who reluctantly participates in a scam to win the national lottery.

HARDCOVER Non-fiction

1. *Night in the Garden of Good and Evil* by John Berendt. (Random House \$23.) The mysterious death of a young man in Savannah, Ga.
2. *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt. (Scribner \$24.) An Irish-American recalls his childhood amid the miseries of Limerick.
3. *The Man Who Listens to Horses* by Monty Roberts. (Random House \$23.) The memoirs of a horse trainer.
4. *The Dark Side of Camelot* by Seymour Hersh. (Little, Brown \$26.95.) A journalist's reappraisal of the private and public life of John F. Kennedy.
5. *Citizen Soldiers* by Stephen E. Ambrose. (Simon & Schuster \$27.50.) The US Army from Normandy to the Bulge to Germany's surrender.
6. *The Perfect Storm* by Sebastian Junger. (Vorton \$23.95.) An account of the northeast of 1991.
7. *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer. (Villard \$24.95.) An account of the ascent of Mount Everest in 1996, the deadliest season in history.
8. *Dirty Jones and Beer* by Drew Carey. (Hyperion \$22.95.) Observations on his life and life in general by the comedian.
9. *Diana: Her True Story - In Her Own Words* by Andrew Morton. (Simon & Schuster \$22.95.) The 1992 bestseller, updated and expanded.
10. *Sources of Strength* by Jimmy Carter. (Times Books/Random House \$23.) Inspirational meditations on the Bible by the former president.

PAPERBACK Fiction

1. *Tom Clancy's Power Plays*: Politics created by Tom Clancy and Martin Greenberg. (Berkley \$7.50.) In 1998, an American contends with terrorists threatening his business in Russia.
2. *Wizard and Glass* by Stephen King. (Plume \$17.95.) Volume 4 of *The Dark Tower*, a series about time and a heroic past.
3. *Petals on the River* by Kathleen E. Woodiwiss. (Avon \$12.50.) An upper-class Englishwoman, forced into indentured servitude, finds love with a widower in 18th-century Virginia.
4. *Total Control* by David Baldacci. (Warner Vision \$7.50.) A woman's efforts to find her husband reveals the ways of big business.
5. *Sole Survivor* by Dean Kuntz. (Ballantine \$7.99.) A reporter searches for a woman who claims to know a secret about the plane crash that killed his family.
6. *The List* by Steve Martin. (Love \$7.50.) A writer's scheme to get her novel on the bestseller list leads to murder and endangers her own life.
7. *Airframe* by Michael Crichton. (Ballantine \$7.99.) A young woman probes a plane's near disaster on its way from Hong Kong to Denver.
8. *"M" Is for Malice* by Sue Grafton. (Fawcett \$7.99.) Murder results when sons in line to inherit a fortune seek their long-missing black-sheep brother.
9. *A Virtuous Woman* by Koye Gibbons. (Village \$10.) The daughter of a Carolina gentry finds love with a tenant farmer.
10. *Say You Love Me* by Johanna Lindsey. (Avon \$6.99.) In Regency England, a penniless orphan finds love after being hired as a maid.

PAPERBACK Non-fiction

1. *Undaunted Courage* by Stephen E. Ambrose. (Touchstone/\$25.95.) The story of how Thomas Jefferson sponsored Lewis and Clark.
2. *Under the Tuscan Sun* by Frances Mayes. (Broadway \$13.) A celebration of the Italian countryside by a poet.
3. *The Color of Water* by James McBride. (Riverhead \$12.) A black writer and musician recalls growing up with his white mother in Brooklyn.
4. *A Civil Action* by Jonathan Harr. (Vintage \$13.) Householders sue industrial polluters.
5. *Underboss* by Peter Mass. (Harper Paperbacks \$6.99.) Life in the Mafia as lived by Salvatore (Sammy the Bull) Gravano.
6. *Girlfriends* by Carmen Renee Berry and Tamara Tinsler. (Villard \$12.95.) The ties that bind women of all ages.
7. *Hanson* by Jill Matthews. (Archway/Pocket \$3.99.) The story of the pop-rock group.
8. *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer. (Anchor/Doubleday \$12.95.) A young man's obsession with the wilderness ends tragically in Alaska.
9. *Seven Years in Tibet* by Heinrich Harrer. (Tarcher/Putnam \$13.95.) An Austrian mountaineer recounts his adventures in the 1940s.
10. *A Child Called "It"* by Dave Pelzer. (Health Communications \$9.95.) The autobiography of a man who survived his mother's abuse.

PAPERBACK Miscellaneous

1. *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff... and It's All Small Stuff* by Richard Carlson. (Hyperion \$8.95.) How to enjoy life much more and contribute to the world we live in.
2. *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul* compiled by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen and Kimberly Kirberger. (Health Communications \$12.95.) Inspiration.
3. *Chicken Soup for the Mother's Soul* compiled by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Jennifer Read Hawthorne, and Marci Shimoff. (Health Communications \$12.95.) Inspiration.
4. *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1998*. (World Almanac/K-III Reference \$9.95.) The 130th annual edition.

HARDCOVER Miscellaneous

1. *Joy of Cooking* by Irma S. Rombauer, Marion Rombauer Becker and Ethan Becker. (Scribner \$30.) Revision of the book first published in 1931.
2. *Simple Abundance* by Sarah Ban Breathnach. (Warner \$17.95.) Advice for women seeking to improve the way they look at themselves.
3. *Making Faces* by Kevin Acquin. (Little, Brown \$25.95.) Counsel about cosmetics from a makeup artist.
4. *Make the Connection* by Bob Greene and Oprah Winfrey. (Hyperion \$18.95.) Ways to improve one's life physically and mentally.

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'Buy American'

Every once in a while, a company is faced with a decision that rises to the level of diplomatic significance. This is a delicate matter when that company is El Al, because it cannot afford to make major decisions that are contrary to its commercial interest. In the case of the choice El Al is making today between Boeing and Airbus, it is appropriate that diplomatic considerations be allowed to tip a balanced scale in Boeing's favor.

Few purchases in the civilian sphere carry as much symbolic significance as that of aircraft for the national airline. In 1979, Israel made a major choice in favor of Boeing aircraft, which dominated El Al's fleet today. At the time, the government reportedly weighed in on behalf of Boeing, despite an internal El Al recommendation to go with the European Airbus consortium. Whatever the merits of the case were at the time, all observers agree that the commercial aircraft El Al is considering today are very closely matched in capabilities, comfort, and price.

On strictly commercial grounds, the professionals involved have said it's not easy to sort out which airplane has the edge. Even the seemingly straightforward question of the reported \$200 million cost is not simple, in that long-term operating costs must be taken into account when considering the price.

The Airbus price tag is reportedly lower, for example, while Boeing argues that it has the edge in maintenance costs.

Moreover, it is hard to measure the cost in training, equipment, and resupplying of parts entailed in switching over from the familiar American product to an unfamiliar European one. Airbus would have to be a considerably better buy to justify such a headache.

As to which company represents the cutting edge in the aircraft market, it is Boeing, not Airbus, that looks like the wave of the future. In 1995, Boeing captured two-thirds of the aircraft market, up from the 60 percent market share that it traditionally held. Given the growing market for commercial aircraft, Airbus is expected to thrive even if it does not improve its 30 percent market share, but Boeing is still clearly the industry leader.

Even more important than Boeing's global position is the fact that the company is already doing about \$300 million in business with Israel's aircraft and defense industries, not including its long

relationship with El Al. As part of the potential deal, Airbus is pledging that it would try to increase its purchasing from Israel, but such a promise can hardly be compared with Boeing's existing track record.

Looking at the governments behind the two players, one sees there is even less of a contest. The United States is Israel's closest ally, in fact an ally whose steadfastness and importance is probably greater than all others combined. The American Congress annually approves \$3 billion in aid to Israel, not to mention scores of millions of dollars in funding for the Arrow ballistic missile defense program, and other defense cooperation projects critical to Israel's security. Perhaps it was due to his keen understanding of the US as Israel's security partner that Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai weighed in to express strong support for the Boeing deal.

France, where Airbus is headquartered and the dominant element of the four-nation consortium, is opposing US foreign policy left and right—and in ways that directly jeopardize Israel's interests. France has joined with Russia and China to form the lobby in the UN Security Council for lifting international sanctions against Iraq, even though it is clear that the mission of destroying Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction is far from complete. French companies are participating in a prospective \$2 billion deal with Iran, while proudly admitting that it violates American sanctions against Iran for supporting terrorism. And France is the most regular European proponent of the Arab line with regard to the Middle East peace process.

Friendship is a two-way street, and Israel should be looking for ways to favor the United States when commercial considerations are essentially balanced. Moreover, why would Israel want to poke a finger in the Americans' eyes precisely at a time when relations are strained?

The favoring of an American company is not only a matter of gratitude and basic national interest, but something Israel committed itself to as part of the \$10 billion loan guarantees the US provided at the height of the Russian immigration; namely, to make extra effort to "buy American" when presented with such a choice. Israel has long said it would try to rectify the fact that only 20 percent of Israel's imports come from the US, compared to 50 percent from Europe. Choosing Boeing would be a good start.



Mapping the problem

I was in the Elysee Palace on Saturday night almost two weeks ago that French President Jacques Chirac abruptly brought out the whip to fiercely chastise Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Gone was the sophisticated image of a fair-minded man of nobility who, the day before, publicly reiterated his condemnation of the Vichy regime for collaborating with the Germans in sending Jews to the Nazi death camps.

Instead, Chirac's guest was scathingly flayed for failing to make major concessions to the Palestinians and was lectured like a wayward pupil at the hands of a pompous Victorian headmaster. In essence Chirac said: "You cannot depend on defensive military barriers to guarantee peace for your citizens. Look what happened to France when our so-called indestructible Maginot line failed to stop the Nazis sweeping westwards in the Second World War."

This arrogant Elysee lecture came as a dramatic turnaround to the genial reception Netanyahu received 48 hours earlier in Bonn, when he was welcomed with warmth by a smiling Chancellor Helmut Kohl. There was a sense of relief in Israeli ranks when Kohl promised to prevent Paris from manipulating the full European community to compel Jerusalem to make "meaningful withdrawals from Palestinian territory."

"You see," was the drift of Chirac's outburst, "Germany and France were once enemies fighting on the battlefield. Now we are good friends. This is the only way to bring about peace and security. There is no need for Maginot-style defensive barriers. They don't work anyway." The pearls of wisdom would have sounded just a little more convincing had they not come from a man who in the 1970s saw Saddam Hussein as the Middle East's golden boy.

To his credit Netanyahu stood up to Chirac's verbal onslaught. He made it clear that he read the Maginot line fiasco differently. France, with weak leadership and an inept military high command did not have the faintest idea of how to use their Maginot defenses to defend their homeland. It was conquered not so much by German tanks but by a

URU DAN
DENNIS EISENBERG

ruthless, determined Nazi ideology. If French generals were professionally adept and motivated by patriotic pride, the Maginot line would have been powerful enough to have held out. After all some of it was as wide as the whole of Israel.

Maintaining his dignity, the

Can today's senior officers be trusted with knowing how to defend Israel at all?

premier then explained that Jews needed viable security zones to defend themselves, so as not to be put in the position of victims as happened in France and elsewhere during the Second World War. Particularly, when the Jewish state faces the ideology of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other fundamentalist Moslem movements.

Netanyahu, might have pointed out that Chirac was a far from perfect ally. Chirac's peaceful France, peaceful Spain, peaceful Britain and peaceful everybody else in peaceful western Europe, all have powerful armies, air forces and navies. You can only guarantee such peace if potential foes are aware that aggression will be faced head on.

He did in fact explain how important it was for tiny Israel to ensure that its vulnerable borders are protected by security zones so as to give its military forces time to resist sudden Arab aggression, as happened so often in the past.

Not only do the defense forces need the Jordan valley to deter a military attack, but also its inland mountain slopes which dominate that valley. This is the thrust behind Ariel Sharon's map, based on traditional military planning. Without such protection, no defense there is possible.

Sharon also proposes a meaningful protective zone between the Palestinian-controlled West Bank area and Israel's original green line which embraces all Israeli settlements.

WHICH brings us to a minimal map of Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, as produced by his top brass. In essence, it is the same map drawn up for Yitzhak Rabin by the same staff, deeply politicized officers. Not only is the Rabin-Mordechai concept of a Jordan valley "defensive zone" narrower than Sharon's, but it is fully flawed as it neglects the key protective mountain slope. The internal zone is narrower. The result is that some 45 settlements will be excluded from the Israeli-controlled zones and left to the tender mercies of Yasser Arafat's hostile, well-armed military formations.

The question must be asked: "Can today's senior officers, bowing to the political ambitions of Mordechai, as they did before the dictates of Rabin, be trusted with knowing how to defend Israel at all?"

With around 1,000 tanks at their command, they took an unconscionable time to cut the key Damascus-Beirut road in the 1982 Lebanon War, a vital object of that campaign. Nor have they found to this day any solution to terror in Lebanon after accepting an inadequate defensive zone there.

These are the same officers, or those of a similarly politically indoctrinated mind-set, who never evolved a method of bringing the intifada to a quick close. And were inept enough to lose so many soldiers' lives unnecessarily when the Jerusalem tunnel furor erupted last year.

Are these officers ready to assure us that they can defend the miniature security zones they have produced with such blind obedience to enable Mordechai, backed so fervently by that military genius, field-marshal David Levy, to look good in the eyes of the United States?

When Netanyahu later today meets US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Paris, we hope and pray that he will recall and firmly stand by the bold riposte he made to Chirac: Israel's very survival depends on employing safe security defensive zones, as outlined by the professionally conceived Sharon map.

The writers are Jerusalem Post columnists.

'Correct economics'

LARRY DERFNER

No one would accuse the Netanyahu government of being politically correct. But it is as economically correct as it could possibly be.

Prime Minister Netanyahu and Finance Minister Yashov Neeman, together with Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel, are doing exactly what contemporary economic orthodoxy says they should do: They've cut government spending. They've brought down inflation. Aside from this, Netanyahu has truly made good on his most heartfelt economic promise: He's been privatizing state-owned companies with a vengeance.

Now laymen like you and I might look around and say all this doesn't seem to be working. They're rioting in Ofakim. The economy is officially slipping from slowdown into recession. The businessmen are furious. Unemployment and poverty are going from very bad to even worse.

But you see, we just don't understand. We don't believe. Things have to get better, because Netanyahu, Neeman and Frenkel aren't operating according to a mere theory or opinion. They're not practicing Thatcherism or Reaganomics or trickle-down economics. They have a different name for it. They call it "correct economics." It's scientific. It's proven. It's the truth. This is a religion with these guys. They're the flip-side of Marcuses.

ACCORDING to their religion, inflation is the worst of all economic evils. It eats away at the economy, and any tight-fisted measure—cutting aid to the poor, cutting spending on health care and education, cutting incentives for businesses to open up in developing towns, raising the cost of borrowing money until people learn the value of a shekel!—anything is justified to hold inflation down. The consequences aren't important, because they're only temporary. In time, everything will work out for the best.

In economics, whatever falls, falls hardest on the poor

Don't think for a minute that the beliefs in correct economics lack a social conscience. On the contrary, they point out that inflation falls hardest on the poor. And of course they're right—in economics, whatever falls, falls hardest on the poor.

I just think that unemployment falls even harder on the poor. It falls hardest of all on the unemployed. I'm not a fan of inflation, but it seems more equitable way of spreading a burden than unemployment.

Ask somebody who's worried about losing his job if he'd rather pay a little more for cucumbers or wake up every morning with no place to go. Ask somebody who's lost his job if he'd rather off now than he was in 1940 or 1985, when inflation got up to 300 percent.

It wasn't the bag of times, but Israelis got through alright. What would a comparable alarming rate of unemployment do? Twenty percent? Twenty-five percent?

I'd like to see Israelis get through that.

BUT I guess I don't understand. The economically correct will be happy to correct me, and anyone else. Their doctrine goes like this: Once inflation is beaten once all this wasteful government spending is finished, once we adopt prudence as our supreme virtue, then everyone will get well. Blessings will come trickling down to the lowest of us. All boats, even the tiny and battered, will be raised up to the skies. It's fated.

Netanyahu, Neeman and Frenkel have missed one little detail: Their doctrine has failed. It's failing here, it failed where it started—in the US and England—and it's being rejected by voters wherever it was tried.

Correct economics helped put millions of people on the streets of America, and helped turn the American middle-class into forced workaholics panicked over the possibility of losing their jobs and joining the homeless.

Correct economics helped club the British working-class into senselessness, breeding a generation that has never worked and probably never will.

I never heard of inflation turning half of a country into an economic wasteland, but that's what unemployment did to the north of England, and that's what it's done to the Negev.

The winds of change are just a little late, getting to Israel. We haven't noticed that correct economics is flying close on the heels of communism, straight for the dustbin of history.

It might be prudent to help the folks in Ofakim get off before it lands.

The writer is a Jerusalem Post columnist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DIRECT OBLIGATION

Sir, — No manager of any organization can conceivably achieve his targets unless he has effective control of a majority of its board of directors. In the absence of such control, he is compelled to please enough board members in order to achieve whatever he considers the immediate goals.

There is no doubt that the prime minister is, in effect, the managing director of his government.

In our present electoral system the chances of a prime minister having a definite majority are, to say the least, very limited. More so, since each of the various members of the Knesset (and ministers) justifiably sees his position and strength depends on his party and not directly on the electorate. Since we nearly always have multi-party governments, due to our electoral system, the position of our prime

minister, is, to say the least, a very difficult and often unsure one.

There have been a number of unsuccessful efforts to change our electoral system and, consequently, our prime ministers have an unduly difficult time and quite often do not even try, and certainly do not succeed, in achieving all of their goals.

Hence, irrespective of one's political views, one must feel concern for the problems of our prime ministers, and more so for the fact that in consequence our country suffers unduly.

Let us try to change our electoral system so as to achieve a position in which each elected member of the Knesset feels a direct, personal obligation and responsibility vis-à-vis his electors, not to his party.

PAUL KOLLEK
Jerusalem.

ROSENBLUM'S PRETENSE

Sir, — At last Jonathan Rosenblum has come out of the closet. For the longest time he has tried to give the impression of sweet reasonableness in his anti-Reform/Conservative articles; playing the good Orthodox Jew in his good cop/bad cop routine.

With his article "A question of tactics" (December 12), he now joins his other Orthodox colleagues in blaming the ill-Orthodox for all of Israel's ills, including the US turning against

Israel. Tomorrow, I'm sure we'll read a Rosenblum article on why Reform and Conservative Jews are responsible for cancer (not in any metaphorical sense), car accidents, and the poor quality of fruits and vegetables at our local supermarket.

At least I am thankful he's dropped his pretense of being logical and moderate.

JOSEPH L. ROMANELLI
Jerusalem.

ARAFAT'S SPEECH

Sir, — In his speech to the Islamic summit in Teheran, Yasser Arafat declared that peace will not be reached without "occupied Jerusalem being returned to its legitimate owners as capital of an independent Palestinian state."

Since Israel will never agree to redive Jerusalem, it should be obvious—even disregarding all other disagreements between Israel and PA—that the so-called "peace process" is at a dead end. What is going on now between Israel and PA is a dialogue of the deaf.

DR. JACOB ROSIN

GALL OF APEASEMENT

Sir, — How can a person with the title of professor of political geography and director of the Humphrey Institute for Social Research of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (David Newman, "Adams and Arafat," December 14) question Israel's legal or moral right to defend itself during the Six Day War of 1967 and in the process capturing the West Bank? Or how can Professor Newman imply that Israel's fighting for its very existence was an act of colonialism?

The gall of the appeasement camp has no bounds. Have they lost all sense of decency and honor with their false sense of reasoning and revision of history.

MAISH RUBIN
Beersheba.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On December 18, 1932, *The Palestine Post* reported the Yishuv's opposition to the government's plan for the formation of a Legislative Council. Nahum Sokolow, president of the Jewish Agency, was not against the proposal merely on the ground that in such a Council Jews would remain a minority, but also because in view of the failure of the parliamentary institutions in other countries such a council would certainly become an instrument for politicians and not statesmen and would retard economic development.

50 years ago: On December 18,

1947, *The Palestine Post* reported that two Jews were wounded near Nevatim after an attack by a gang of 60 Arabs who were believed to have suffered severe losses.

There was sporadic shooting in Jerusalem and a number of Jews and Arabs were injured.

Jewish prisoners continued their fifth day of a strike in the Kishon lock-up in the Old City claiming poor sanitary and security conditions.

In Tel Aviv Arabs handed over the body of Michael Boehm, 17, who was shot in the head in the Manshieh border quarter. A number of Transjordan Frontier

Guards soldiers deserted with their arms to Lebanon to fight for the Palestine Arabs.

25 years ago: On December 18, 1972, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that the Soviet Union was again "reappraising" relations with Egypt.

The Knesset Ecology Commission condemned government inaction on pollution and called for the tightening of regulations to combat air and noise pollution. It demanded from the government to stop passing the buck and to realize that ecology is its responsibility.

Alexander Zvielli

صكنا عن الامم

Weekender

Sephardi power

The award-winning TV drama 'Shuli's Guy' portrays a community with 'a whole other value system'

By HELEN KAYE

Two in a row for Doron Tsabari. Last year his *Underdogs* — a War Movie won the Israel Academy Award for Best Documentary. Last month his made-for-TV drama *Shuli's Guy* won him another award.

The documentary aired earlier this year. Tonight, on Channel 2 at 9:05, audiences will have a chance to see what grabbed Academy members about *Shuli's Guy*.

Tsabari is delighted about the success, but cautious, saying that "I still have a long way to go. I still feel as though I've just about finished basic training. As a director I'm not ripe yet. I'm learning all the time, on every level."

On the subject of Israeli cinema, Tsabari has his own place in it, he says. "I see. There's a revolution going on. In a few years Israeli films will be the hottest thing around. Up until a few years ago, Israeli films were pretty awful. They didn't really happen anywhere and they weren't about real people."

The Academy Award winners in the last two or three years have been the people he went to film school with at Tel Aviv University, and he counts them off on his fingers, like classmates Julie Shlesinger, *Amalia Express* practically swept the boards this year, or Ran Kameli who won this year's Best Documentary for *Mother's First Olympics*.

Their films, he says, "connect. You should see the students I'm teaching. They're the new generation and are more connected to what makes them Israeli. Never mind the message. Cinema is about telling stories, and the stories I tell happen at eye level, to ordinary people, and that's why they communicate."

Underdogs out-rated even *Dudu* when it premiered, so much so that this cliff-hanger about the 1977 election of the Beit She'an soccer club and its home town was aired again, and just as many saw it the second time around.

Shuli's Guy takes place on election day in Or Yehuda in 1977 when the town was still a disadvantaged development town with high unemployment. The 1977 elections were those which swept

the Likud and Menachem Begin to power in what became known as "the upset."

But at Shuli's house, nobody cares about the elections. Her fiancé is coming to meet her family for the first time and the household prepares, no one more than Mazal (Esti Yerusalmi). She has returned home after a painful divorce and the movie is really about her, about the choices she'll have to make when it comes time for her to elect her own future.

Technically, the movie is no great shakes. It can't be, not on the tiny budgets local filmmakers have to work with, but the story comes across tenderly yet unsentimentally. There are many, small, directorial felicities, and the people are real, the ones we all meet everywhere.

Both Tsabari's prize-winning films deal with Israel's Sephardi community and culture "which has a whole other value system and which is where I come from," and which is only now beginning to flex its ethnic muscles after decades of being either marginalized or portrayed as a pathetic underdog.

The screenplay is by Dorit Rabinovitch, whose first novel, *Omerian*, about her grandmother's life in Persia, became a runaway bestseller. She brought the screenplay to Tsabari, who was immediately attracted to it because of the subject, the small-town venue, and the story.

Beyond that, he saw in *Shuli's Guy* not only an intimate and vivid recreation of everyday life in a Sephardi family but his own story, "the story of a man who comes from nowhere and saves a woman and her child. If it hadn't been for Avraham, my stepfather, I wouldn't be where I am today."

Tsabari, 33, was born in Haifa. His parents divorced when he was eight months old. His mother, a hairdresser, remarried when he was six and the family went to live in Arad, still a small town, where Tsabari grew up.

The Sephardi family, he says, regards divorce as a disgrace, and because Avraham married a divorced woman with a child, his own father has not spoken to him since the wedding. Similarly, an occupation, a trade "that will put money in the purse," is honored, and "when I told my relatives I was going into film, they were



Esti Yerusalmi stars in 'Shuli's Guy' — an intimate and vivid recreation of everyday life in a Sephardi family which views divorce as a disgrace. (Moshe Shai)

horrified. Until I started winning prizes. Then they became reconciled, seeing that you could actually make money at this."

Tsabari's fascination with the medium started when his biological father, a ticket scalper, would park his boy in two or three movies a day on their weekends together while he sold his tickets.

The movies were also an escape from the boredom of life in Arad. To earn ticket money, the 11-year-old Tsabari went to work cleaning stairwells. Then, at 14, he got smart and offered to put up movie posters in return for free tickets. But Tel Aviv was where he longed to be. Tel Aviv was where the action was. Where else could guys lick chocolate off a girl's body at a party? At least that was what he'd heard.

At 11 he had also decided to become prime minister "so I consciously did things that would look good in my autobiography," like getting good grades, heading the student council, and becoming a Hashomer Hatzair counselor.

He became a lieutenant in Nahal Commando, served in Lebanon, and later went to jail four times for

refusing to do his reserve duty in the territories. When he got out of the army in 1986, everybody else took off with backpacks, but he went to Hollywood. "I spent the worst year of my life there. I was lonely. I didn't belong. I didn't like America. The closest I got to the movies was having my picture taken outside Steven Spielberg's house."

Home again, he enrolled in film school at TAU, "where I really started to blossom." *Driv*, the graduating film he made with Uri Lubar, won them six Mizrabi prizes in 1994.

Tsabari is political, fairly far on the left as his IDF jail time indicates. Those who watched the Academy Awards will remember Tsabari on stage holding his poster of Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky, telling people to call the ministry to protest the cut-off of funds to the industry.

He believes in justice and in the power of the press and the media to help get it. That's partly why he became a journalist, starting at the now defunct daily *Hadashot* "because a newspaper should be

the mouth of people without one." It was also how he supported his studies.

But it was film he wanted, "because the paper wraps fish the next day but a movie lives forever." So he quit a good paying job as an assignments editor on Channel 2 and was out of work for a year. He got so desperate, he even considered the civil service. It was while he was waiting in line for an application that salvation appeared in the form of a girl who told him that the Hebrew/Arabic *Hamsa Hamisha* program was looking for correspondents.

That was the beginning of what looks like a brilliant career, but Tsabari is keeping his feet on the ground. He's currently editing a documentary he made about last year's Oscars in Los Angeles, which he hopes will be his passport to the English-language movie world. But he's also teaching film to eager hopefuls in Sderot, Dimona, Ofakim and at the Orthodox film school, Bama'aleh.

"Tell the story, be real, be easy, loose, and look around you," he instructs them.

Novels Remind

Novelist A.B. Yehoshua talks about his favorite books of the 20th century

A.B. Yehoshua is one of our towering literary figures, and he is as prolific as he is creative. Beginning with his first collection of stories, *Death of an Old Man* (1962), Yehoshua plowed ahead, writing everything from radio plays and short stories to his well-known novels, including *The Lover* (1981), *A Late Divorce* (1982), *Mr. Mani* (1990), and his latest, *Voyage To the End of the Millennium* (1997). In the process, he has helped to propel Israeli literature onto the world scene, with 10 books translated into 23 languages.

Yehoshua is known for his pioneering fiction techniques and intricate use of modern Hebrew, while his plots tackle the thorniest dilemmas of Israeli public and private life. He was born and raised in Jerusalem — his father was a Sephardi fourth-generation sabra, and his mother immigrated from Morocco in 1932.

In choosing his favorite novels of this century, Yehoshua says: "There is absolutely no comparison between the first half of this century — in particular, the period between the two world wars — and the second. In literature, as well as in art and music, the most meaningful art was produced between 1910 and 1935."

He laments what he sees as the comfort and perhaps passivity of the post-modern era in the century's latter half. He bases his choices on the books' historical-intellectual contexts as much as their literary qualities.

with special precision, devoid of the melodrama and falsehood that generally surround attempts to address the artist's quandaries."

3. *Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka (1916)

"The beautiful but revolutionary story about a man who turns into an insect and thereby embarks upon a new, special interaction with his family. This is pure surrealism, full of paradoxes that incessantly give way to others, written in the most believable manner. This story has garnered more interpretations than any other book of the 20th century."



(Zeev Aderman)

4. *A Simple Story* by S.Y. Agnon (1935)

"Agnon is one of the most important Israeli writers, and this book is rightfully considered one of the most beautiful pieces of prose written in modern Hebrew. It's a story about simple love between very simple people, yet it has so many layers, so rich with psychological meaning. I find myself drawn to reread it again and again, and at this point, I know almost the entire book by heart."

5. *The Stranger* by Albert Camus (1942)

"Written in 1942, this book opened the era of literature that followed the Second World War. If one wants to understand the incipience of ideas that are now so common and so deeply internalized, this compact and powerful creation foreshadows the birth of the most fundamental concepts of the modern period."

— Dahlia Scheindin

Hot tip

By KAREN SULKIS

Tel Aviv

"Women's Health for the 21st Century: Taking Control" is the theme of a women's health symposium taking place tonight at the Dan Accadia Hotel. Speakers include noted American surgeon Dr. Frayer Schnabel and women's health expert and author Dr. Eileen Hoffman. The program begins at 8. The Dan Accadia is located on Ramat Yam Street in

Herzliya Pituah. Call (09) 957-6076.

The Appropo in Tzabala goes swing tonight, with music by saxophonist Albert Piamanta, double bassist Eli Magen, pianist Nahum Pamparkovitch and drummer Pappo Levi. Tonight at 10. Call 644-7098.

If you're able to get tickets, you can catch Lars von Trier's film *The Kingdom II* tonight at 7 at the Cinematheque. Von Trier's *Breaking the Waves* was an especially popular Cinematheque draw earlier this year, selling out screenings for months. Will *The Kingdom II* do the same? Find out for yourself. Call 691-7181.

The documentary *Trembling Before God* explores issues of homosexuality and religion. The film, which was shot in New York, London and Los Angeles over the course of three years, screens tonight at 8 at 28 Nahmani Street. Call 620-4327.

The children's play *Grandpa Comes to Kindergarten* takes the stage today at 5 p.m. at the Nevech Tzedek Center. Young people ages 3 to 7 are invited. Call 516-4754.

Arkady Duchin headlines a Radio Tel Aviv show tonight at 9 at the Port.

Afula Express comes to Tel Aviv. Single parents and singles in their 40s and 50s can thrill to a show by magician Gerald Senshi. The Experiments! The program starts tonight at 9. Call 964-8789 or 696-9017 for location details.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem Witch Way? Dr. Jenny Klein and Serpentine present *Witches: The History, Practice and Culture of Witches*, a words-and-music discussion for women only. Tonight at 8 at Kol Ha'isha Women's Center, 38 Ben-Yehuda

Street, third floor. Call 622-2591.

The Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra presents a program of music from the movies. Carl Davis conducts his own work, as well as pieces by Henry (The Pink Panther) Mancini, John (Star Wars) Williams, Nino Rota and others. Tonight at 8:30 at the Jerusalem Theater, Henry Crown Hall. Call 561-0011.

The Spanish dance troupe La Ribot performs *Piezas Desiguadas*, and Swiss dancer Gill Joban performs *Trilogy*. Tonight at 9 at Habama.

And Points Beyond

Arvo Valmer conducts the Haifa Symphony Orchestra in works by himself, Brahms and Nielsen. Tonight at 8:30 in the Haifa Theater North.

Professor Shlomo Avineri lectures on "Herzli's Way Toward Zionism and Diplomacy," with

an introduction by Hanan Bar-On. Tonight at 8 at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot.

Romanian conductor Horia Andreescu leads American guest soprano Claudia Walte and the Israel Sinfonietta Beersheba in works by Mozart and Beethoven. Tonight at 8:30 at the Beersheba Conservatory.

Please note

Due to a sudden illness, trumpeter Nicholas Payton has had to postpone his two local concerts scheduled for tomorrow and Friday. A new date is expected to be announced shortly. Ticketholders are requested to go to or call the box office at the Israel Museum (02-670 8985) or the Tel Aviv Performing Arts Center (03-692 7777) for a refund, a replacement or a voucher.

סדרה מן האמריקאי

هكذا عن الامم



For such a small production, the array of wines at the Cremisan Monastery is staggering.

(Joel Fishman)

Weekender Travel

Forgotten landmark

Sandwiched in between Israeli apartment blocks and Palestinian luxury villas lies the monastery of Cremisan, an almost forgotten landmark.

"Israelis used to come here all the time, before the intifada," says the vice-rector, Father Luciano Norda.

In the those days, the monastery would bustle with visitors, especially on Shabbat, when there was hardly room in the parking lot for all the cars and the monastery's wine shop would be jammed with would-be buyers. Then came the intifada and Israelis decided it

wasn't worth getting a broken windshield or worse, just to buy a bottle of wine. If there had been any signs of renewed visits, the recent terror attacks and subsequent closures put an end to that.

Cremisan is on the border between the West Bank and Jerusalem, with the main building officially in Jerusalem and the storeroom on the other side of the parking lot in the West Bank. The long winding road, to the monastery is just past one of the coordinating offices between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

In the past, most Israeli visitors came to the monastery by driving through the outskirts of Bethlehem and the center of Beit Jalla, now both part of the Palestinian Authority.

However, there is an alternate route, using the Bethlehem bypass highway from Jerusalem, following the prominent sign to Khadr, just after the tunnels, and turning right at the large intersection just after the Hope School. As one drives down the narrow winding road to the monastery, one passes dozens of new homes and apartments being built by Palestinians, while across the valley rise the apartment houses of Gilo. Only at the very end, almost at the entrance to Cremisan, does one have the feeling of isolation and rural beauty associated with the monastery.

For the 37 theological students from around the world, including Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, who study there along with their dozen or so teachers, Cremisan is an island of tranquility. The main monastery building, which dates from the last century, has stone floors, worn shiny with use and scrubbing, and high arched ceilings. The walls are several meters thick, providing defense against winter chill and summer heat.

Prominently pictured on walls throughout are Pope John Paul II and Don Bosco, founder of the Silesian order, to which the monastery belongs.

These days, with the year 2000 looming, the community of Cremisan, like many Christian institutions in this country, is mindful of the fact that millions of pilgrims are expected for the Jubilee year. It has applied for permission to expand the third story of the monastery building, a move that would enable it to house groups of pilgrims.

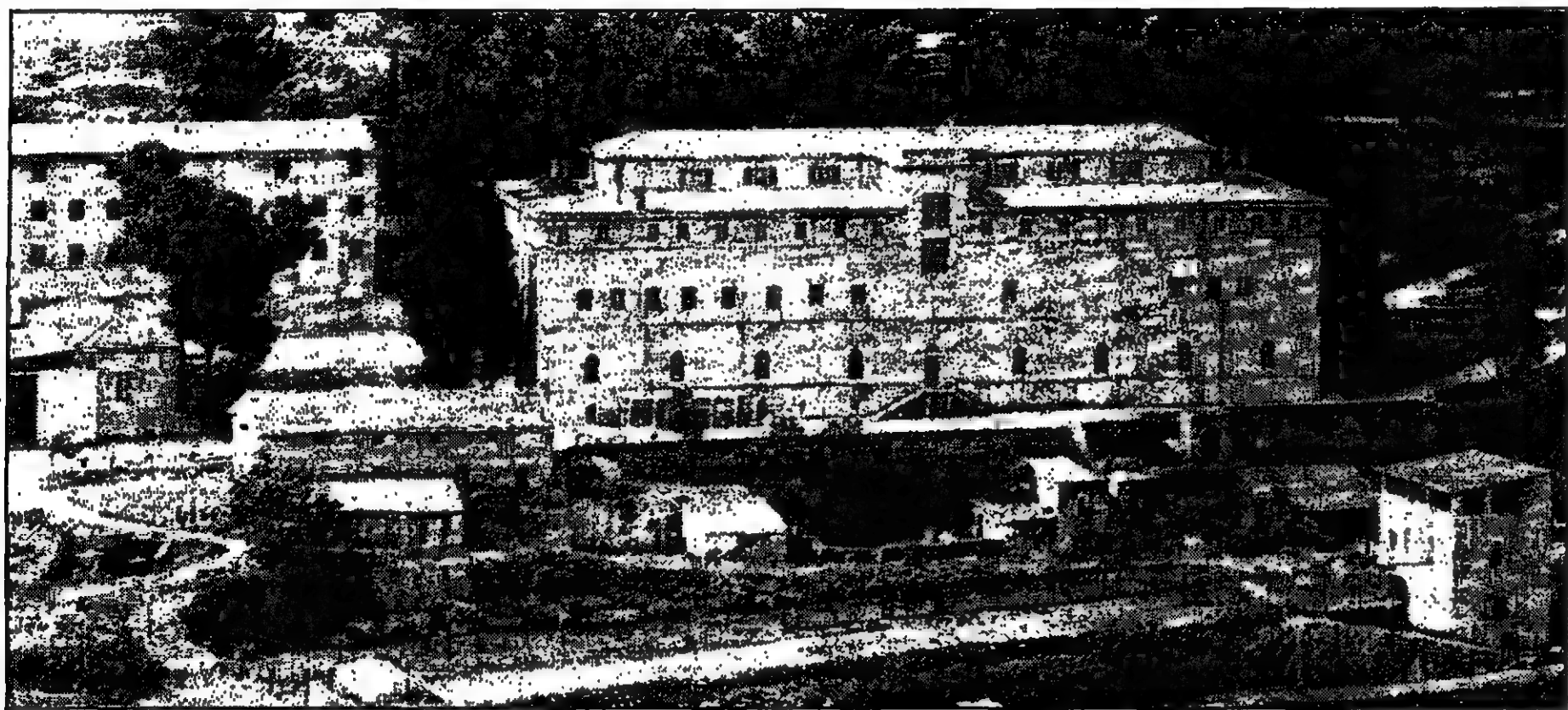
The main attraction for the ordinary visitor is the wine cellar and adjoining shop, which is located a few hundred meters beyond the monastery building. The wine production here is limited to 700,000 liters a year, a drop in the barrel, as it were, compared to other wineries in the country. The grapes come from the order's own vineyards at Beit Jimal and Rifat, near Beit Shemesh, as well as from the Beit Jalla and Hebron areas. Only two percent of the grapes come from the vineyards at Cremisan.

For such a small production, the array of wines is staggering, including, for the first time this year, a sparkling wine, similar to Carmel's Fantasia.

The cellar, with its high arched stone ceilings, is filled with oak casks of aging wine and brandy. Prices are extremely reasonable, ranging from NIS 12 to NIS 24 for the cellar's Cabernet Sauvignon, a wine that has the traits of a rough Chianti.

The wine shop is open daily except Sunday from 8 a.m. to noon and 1.30 to 4.30 p.m. Organized groups are welcome to picnic in the extensive forests surrounding the monastery if they make arrangements in advance. Tel. (02) 742605, fax (02) 744827.

Day Tripper By Haim Shapito



An island of tranquility: Theological students from around the world, including Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, study at the Cremisan Monastery.

On a Limb

The lowest bike trail on earth

By TRACY FISKE

Nahal Pratzim is a biker's dream trail: the soft surface is easy to ride on, the surrounding mountains provide spectacular scenery, and utter quiet reigns. Best of all, it's downhill all the way.

People buy mountain bikes because they embody a sense of freedom. Unlike street bikes, they are specially built to jump rocks and branches, eat dirt, and whisk you over the steepest and toughest terrain. But too often, urban "mountain bikers" don't manage to escape the confines of cement, asphalt and steel. The trail remains an unfulfilled dream, infinitely postponed till tomorrow.

My advice is to follow the wisdom of the Nike marketing slogan and "just do it." Get out of the city, and quick, before the really rainy weather settles in.

Myself, I've just taken my first overnight off-road excursion since purchasing my mountain bike two and a half years ago — an exceedingly beautiful ride through the arid, moon-like landscape of the Dead Sea. And it was easy — for the most part.

There is a seemingly limitless number of trails in the Judean Desert suitable for biking. While you can ride the scenic, virtually pedal-free descent down to the Dead Sea from Jerusalem on the main road or on smaller dirt trails, factor in the political climate as you will be going through the Palestinian territories. Because we were planning to tour the more distant southerly part of the region, we chose to view the sandy, barren mountains and scattered Beduin villages along the way through the windows of an Egged bus. You can store bicycles in the luggage compartment of the bus, but there is an additional charge equal to half the regular fare.

We arrived at Ein Bokek — that midway Bamba break between Jerusalem and Eilat — at about 4 p.m. We took the road south along the sea which was relatively level and smooth. We passed a lake just off the road and watched the sun begin to set.

With the evening upon us, we tried desperately to reach the closest designated sleeping station which was another 6 km. off the road, but we arrived at the turnoff

just as the last vestiges of daytime were melting into darkness.

Luckily, we saw on our map that there was another sleeping station perched just beyond the road. A huge metal sculpture entitled "The State of Man" loomed over the site, put up by none other than The

Dead Sea Works. Our little private alcove afforded us views of a factory complex so vast, so fit up and full of smoking chimneys, that this Jersey girl felt right at home in the stark Israeli wilderness. (If you aren't pressed for time, there are many beautiful spots in the area,

designated for sleeping by the Nature Reserves Authority that are more remote.)

We got up the following morning at 6, packed our bikes and set out for the desert. The ascent to the spectacular Flour Cave was probably the most difficult part of our trip, but well worth the effort. We rode all the way to the entrance of the caves on the chalky, spongy Nahal Pratzim trail. Thousands of years of water erosion into the mountain of salt and marl rock has produced this huge cave. Pale walls of rock etched with elaborate designs flank you on both sides. The short journey through the pitch-black cave is spooky and fun (we left our bikes at the entrance). A flashlight helped us avoid low ceilings and sharp turns, as well as the many sleeping bodies on the cave floor. Apparently the cave served as the venue for a gathering of the Rainbow Tribe.

Nahal Pratzim is a biker's dream trail: the soft surface is easy to ride on, the surrounding mountains provide spectacular scenery, and utter quiet reigns. Best of all, it's downhill all the way for an hour.

At the end of the river valley, you're about 6 km. from Ein Bokek along the main road. Ein Bokek, besides referring to the area crowded with hotels and spas, is a spring, similar to Nahal David at Ein Gedi, but quieter and less visited. You can ride up the creek through the lush reserve for about 10 minutes, at which time it's better to throw the bikes into a bush and explore the area on foot. Rivers abound and the waterfalls and pools are perfect for bathing.

Somehow the beauty of the landscape is intensified when you pedal through it on your bicycle. The sea is more sparkling, the mountains more towering, the wildlife a bit friendlier. Call it the rewards of a hard-won effort.

So, don't be just another urban yuppie. Unlock that pricey mountain bike from the telephone pole outside your apartment, jump on the saddle and head south.

Ride the scenic, virtually pedal-free descent from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea on the main road or on smaller dirt trails.

(Matthew Lit)



Be prepared

You don't need to be a triathlete-in-training to enjoy mountain biking in the Judean desert.

Actually, the most important component of a successful trip is to plan well. We didn't. Which makes me qualified to tell you what can — and will — go wrong on such a trip, and how to avoid little nuisances.

First of all, a few days before the trip, get your bike ready for the journey. Take it to the shop for that long overdue overhaul and make sure it's up for the challenge. If you don't already have saddle bags, now's the time to invest. A bottle and water-bottle holder is a must for those easy-to-grab drinks, and if the frame of your bike is big enough, get two. You'd be surprised how quickly you go through a liter of water in the baking sun. An air pump and flashlight could prove to be real lifesavers.

The next step is packing. Pack light and pack well, and load in what you can the night before (meaning everything but food). You'll need a sleeping bag, suitable clothing (while desert days are hot and dry, nights can get cold and windy). You can't have too much water. One of those small gas burners will come in extremely handy for cooking and making hot drinks. We left ours sitting on the counter at home, which was a bad idea because there weren't any to be bought near the Dead Sea and firewood is hard to come by. Bring a lighter, a camera with film, a good trail map (and someone who can read it).

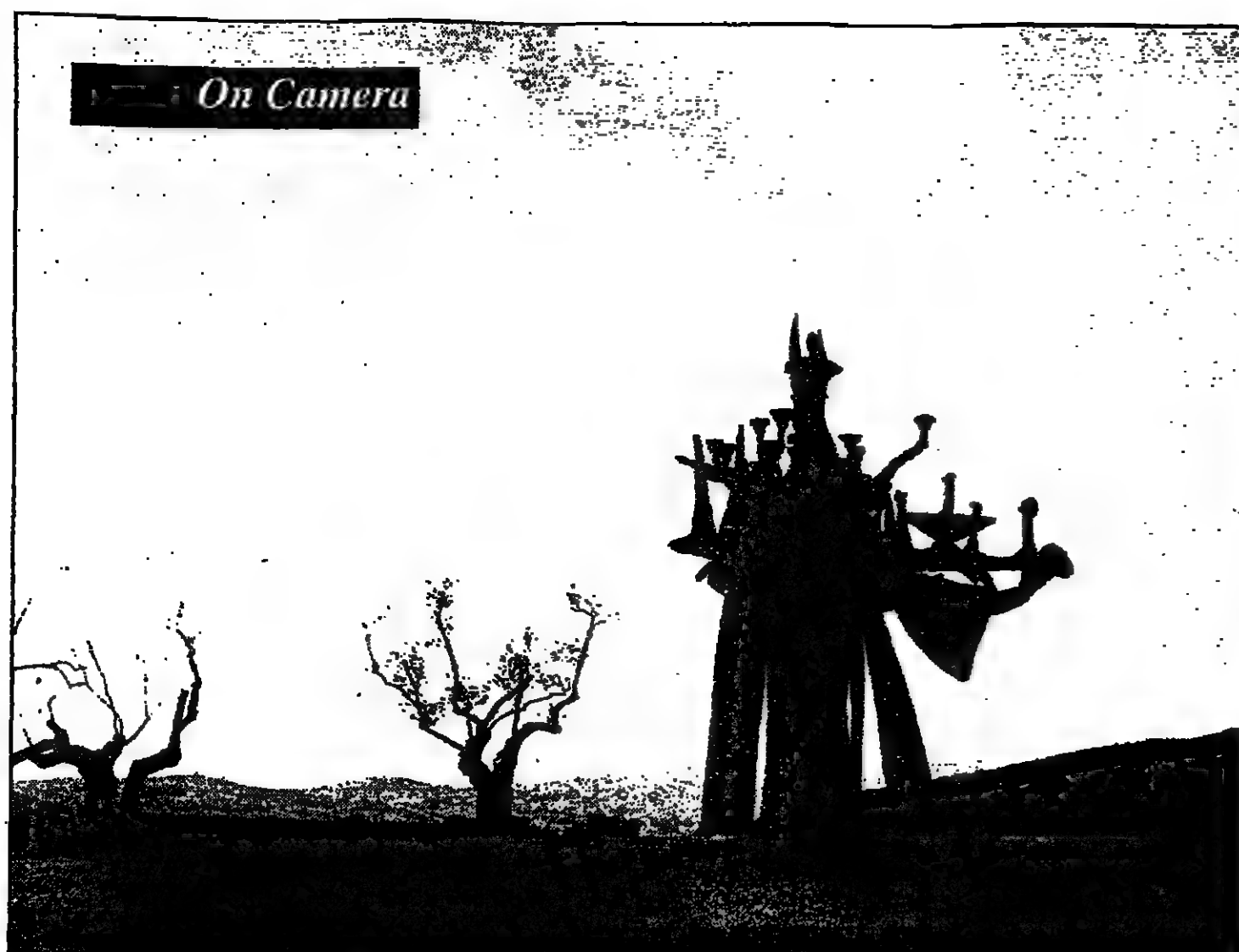
Non-perishable foods like nuts, fruit roll, bread and some vegetables are easy to store and eat. We planned for more ambitious meals, but ended up not having the patience — or

the proper heating unit — to do any real cooking. We were saved by a last-minute inspiration to bring along a package of hot dogs, which cook fast over a small fire. Don't forget coffee, tea and sugar, a pot and utensils.

Remember to check the weather report. Flash floods can be dangerous.

Get up early the day of your trip. Finish any last-minute packing and leave. We tried to do everything that morning and as a result forgot things and didn't get on our way till afternoon.

Lastly, at the end of your exciting and tiring weekend of biking, you'll need to get home. The bus from Eilat to Jerusalem stops on its way at Ein Bokek at around 7:30 on Saturday nights. Don't miss it! The road back up to Jerusalem is a killer. — T.F.



Sculpture garden, Israel Museum, Jerusalem

(photo: Marli Shamir)

Of light and luck

By DAVID BRAUNER

A photographer without luck is not a photographer. Here speaks the voice of experience, the voice of photographer Marli Shamir who in her long career has had plenty of luck, but also more than a little disappointment and frustration.

She recalls one of those lucky moments in the Billy Rose Sculpture Garden of the Israel Museum. The sun was low and shining into her lens. The image she caught included a flare spot framing a young girl leaping for the sky. "The photograph jumped out at me," says Shamir. "I ran after it. I ran and pressed the shutter. She [the young girl] was like an angel that just landed. Everything and every person was in place."

Still elegant in her 70s, Shamir began formal study of photography as a teenager in Berlin during the mid-1930s. Her initial studies in aesthetics were so free that she did not know "where to begin." Later she studied microphotography in Copenhagen, where she came into contact with the Zionist kibbutz movements. She did *hachshara* in Sweden. There she met Werner Braun (another veteran Israeli photographer), who helped her build her own darkroom.

"Since then the photo virus has never left me," she arrived in pre-state Israel in 1938 at age 19.

In her early years living in a tent on kibbutz, there was only time for "bread and butter" photography. While working as a science photographer at Rehovot's Weizmann Institute, she churned out 1,000 prints a day in hot, primitive conditions. Today, she does not know how she managed this feat.

In 1945 Shamir moved to Jerusalem to set up a studio. To this day, the city's stony magic has captivated Shamir's camera. She has made a point of systematically photographing Jerusalem life and architecture, whenever time permits her the luxury of doing her own thing.

During the War of Independence, apart from maintaining her partnership in a studio/shop on Jaffa Road and supporting her newly arrived parents who had somehow survived the Holocaust, Shamir worked for the Hagana secretly photographing thousands of British documents in dangerous conditions. The way to and from work involved "dodging bullets and shells. People ran from one courtyard to the next. That's when I got to know Jerusalem."

In 1953 she married career diplomat Meir Shamir. As the wife of an ambassador, she had many duties that kept her out of the darkroom. On the other hand, Shamir spent many years abroad. Between 1966 and 1973 the couple served in the West African countries of Ivory Coast, Mali and Gabon. The statuesque people and mud-built architecture of Mali proved the most interesting to her photographic eye.

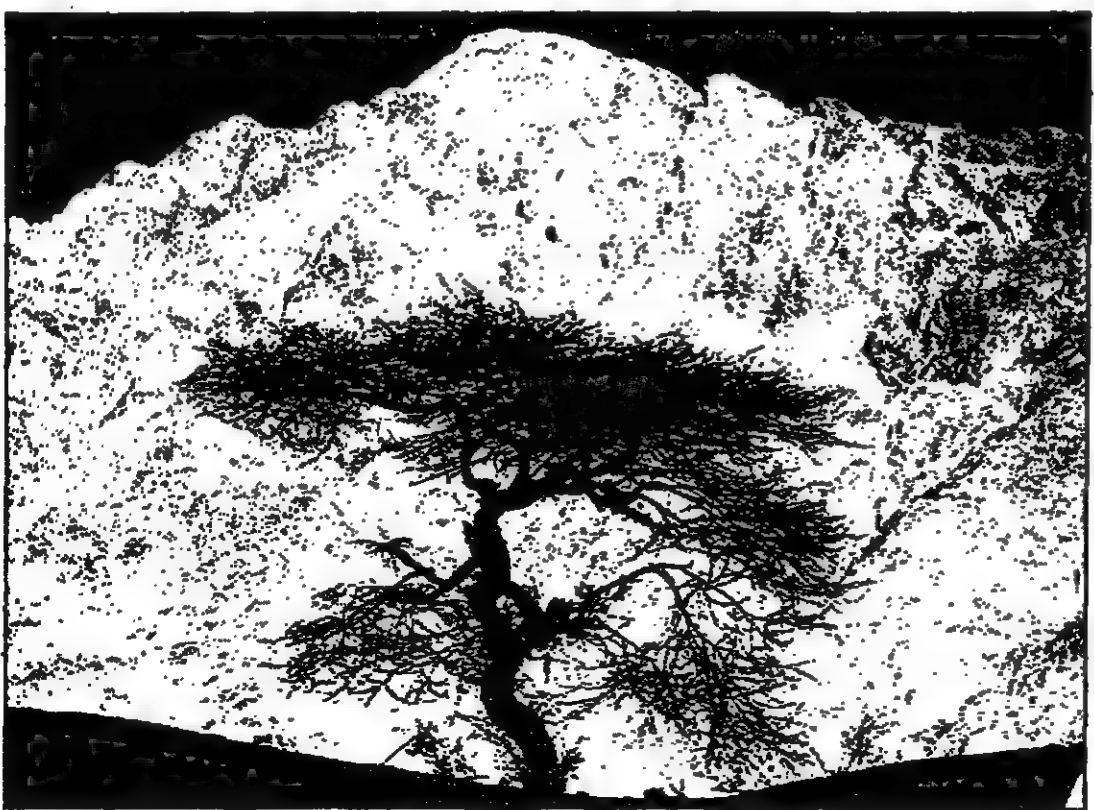
Shamir says that "the light there [in equatorial Africa] is so strong that one felt the need to wear two pairs of sunglasses." All outings began at three in morning. Also, the extremes of heat and humidity



Above: Photographer Marli Shamir (David Brauner)

Right: Study in black, white and gray at Mopti in Mali

Below: Desert acacia in the Negev near Eilat, 1949.



meant she had to work for months in the darkroom to achieve reliable and consistent results.

Moving on to the '80s and Strasbourg, Shamir was approached by a Canadian secretary who was researching a doctorate on "Architecture in the Art Nouveau Style." She needed illustrations and asked Shamir to teach her photography. However, it became apparent after a few lessons that it was better if Shamir did the photography herself. Her contribution to the thesis helped restore the Strasbourg municipal records destroyed by the Germans in the First World War, and resulted in a solo exhibition.

In Paris, color engaged Shamir's work, and she experimented with the Cibachrome process of printing stills from slides. She recalls wasting materials, time, money and many a night until she perfect-

ed the process. Her Paris period inspired more freedom in her photography. "Without any objective in mind," she explored the curiosities of reflected light in windows and mirrors.

Back home in Jerusalem, Shamir spent six months ferreting out every angle and ray of light in the new Supreme Court building. The result was "The Hall of Light" (1994) exhibition, which still appears throughout the Far East and the Americas.

Despite her travels to far and exotic lands, Shamir makes it clear that some of her favorite photographs were taken literally in her own backyard. For years, she has stolen quiet moments to cover every inch of a barren, rock- and junk-strewn tract of land near her Beit Hakerem home. Then two years ago bull-

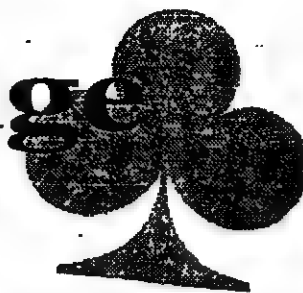
dozers began clearing the land for construction.

"Now," she laments, "my field is gone." For Shamir, who still actively photographs, picture-taking is not just light and luck, however important these two factors may be. "Photography is still identified as pressing a button; the viewer doesn't know anything about the time-consuming work before and after. The end product must be good. It shouldn't be seen if it is not good."

Shamir's latest exhibition, "Junk Sculpture" at Jerusalem's Nora Gallery opens in mid-January. Your photography questions and comments are welcome. Contact David Brauner, e-mail: morir@mail.biu.ac.il or fax (02) 563-7792 or c/o Photo Archives, The Jerusalem Post, P.O.B. 81, Jerusalem 91000.

Weekender Leisure

Bridge



Down three in the kibitzer's chair

By MATTHEW GRANOVETTER

South dealer
Both sides vulnerableNorth (Burger)
♠ K 10 3
♥ K 9 8 3
♦ K 9 2
♣ 9 4 2West (Mrs. Sprung) East (Mr. Sprung)
♠ Q ♠ 7 6 5 2
♥ A Q 10 2 ♥ 7
♦ 7 5 4 3 ♦ 1 8 6
♣ 7 6 5 3 ♣ K Q J 8South (Cayne)
♠ A 9 8 4
♥ J 6 5 4
♦ A Q 10
♣ A 10South West North East
1 NT pass 2 ♠ pass
2 ♥ pass 3 ♥ pass
4 ♥ (all pass)

Opening lead: ♠ 5

When you travel halfway around the world to play bridge, it goes without saying that it's a good idea not to play on the very afternoon you arrive.

Recently, in this situation, I had the experience of going down three tricks in a contract. Luckily for me, I was only kibitzing, not playing!

The scene was the American Fall Nationals in St. Louis, Missouri. My flight from Tel Aviv and New York arrived on Monday morning, and I wisely refused to play the afternoon session, saving myself for the evening. Instead, I sat down to watch the Board-a-Match team final. On the first board of the

afternoon I was glad I was only kibitzing. Board-a-Match scoring is mostly an American system, wherein a team of four players is split up: one pair plays North-South and the other pair East-West. Each deal is scored a "win," "half" or "loss," depending on the combined scores of your table and that of your teammates.

When you kibitz at bridge, it is proper etiquette to watch only one hand. This restriction also makes the kibitzing more enjoyable because you can put yourself in one player's position and see how you would have done holding his cards. With this in mind, I chose to sit behind Jimmy Cayne (South on today's deal) who, when he is not winning bridge championships, is chairman of the board at Bear Stearns Co., a stock-brokerage house in New York. His partner is Chuck Burger, a lawyer from Detroit, and their opponents on this round were recently married Jo Ann and Danny Sprung, of Philadelphia.

Cayne opened the bidding one notrump and heard his partner bid two clubs, Stayman. He showed his lower four-card major, and when partner invited game with a raise to three hearts, he accepted. I was a bit surprised that he bid four hearts with a minimum 15-count, but he did have lots of *look-alikes* that are especially valuable in trump contracts.

Mrs. Sprung (West) led a low club and I quickly tried to analyze the hand before Cayne played. Looking only at the North-South cards, the contract appeared hopeless. My thoughts were: Duck the club lead, win the club return, lead a heart to the king, cash three diamond winners, ruff a club and exit with a trump. If everyone follows to the minors and the trumps are 3-2, someone may win the double-

ton queen or doubleton ace of hearts and be endplayed, forced to open up the spade suit. South will lose only two hearts and one club.

Now I watched Cayne play the hand. He won the first trick and led a low heart. West followed smoothly with the deuce, and Cayne called for the 8 from dummy. The 8 won the trick! Cayne now led a club to East, who returned a club. Cayne cashed three diamonds and led a spade to dummy's ace. Next the ten of spades was led and, when East played low, Cayne also played low, finessing against the jack. West ruffed this trick with the ten of hearts but was able to score only one more trick, the ace of hearts - making 620.

(This result won the board for the Cayne team because his teammates were minus 110 at the other table, defending a contract of two hearts making two.)

What would have happened to me in my line of play? Well, my line was to duck the first club trick, win the return, lead a heart to the king, cash three diamonds, ruff a club, and lead a heart. On this deal, West would be able to cash three trump tricks, a diamond trick and a second club trick for a total of seven tricks. I knew it was a long nap.

Later in the tournament, I gave the hand to several expert players, none of whom matched Cayne's successful line. One analyst pointed out, however, that West can defeat the contract by putting in the ten of hearts when the first round of trumps is led toward dummy. This is hardly an obvious move, since West doesn't expect declarer to put in the 8 on the first round.

Matthew Granovetter can be reached at gran@nvision.net.il.

Chess

The London Grandmaster

By NIGEL SHORT

It has been observed that Britain has a number of excellent chess players, but a relative paucity of tournaments. Either one can saunterly take the view that this reflects upon our native genius for producing talent in the most adverse of circumstances, or one can see this as a long-term cause for concern.

One man with the latter opinion, who has taken it upon himself to remedy the situation, is Adam Raof, who over the past year or two has organized several tournaments for people hoping to obtain international master results. No fewer than 16 "norms" have been attained, a great achievement. His second grandmaster event in London is underway as I write, offering our most promising young players a rare opportunity to reach the coveted title.

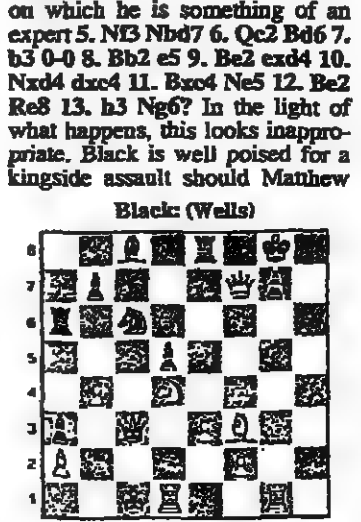
This bloodthirsty encounter occurred in the first round.

White: Turner
Black: Wells
London, 1997

1.e4 e6 2.Nc3 d5 3.d4 c6 4.e3. Avoiding the complications of 4.e4 dxe4 5.Nxe4 Bb4+ 6.Be2 Qxd4 7.Bxb4 Qxe4+ 8.Be2, which is probably quite good for

white but requires substantial homework 4...Nf6 4...f5 is reasonable here, but Peter Wells prefers to stick to the Semi-Slav on which he is something of an expert 5.Nf3 Nb4 6.Qc2 Bd6 7.b3 0-0 8.Bb2 e5 9.Be2 exd4 10.Nxd4 dxc4 11.Bxc4 Ne5 12.Be2 Re8 13.b3 Ng6? In the light of what happens, this looks inappropriate. Black is well poised for a kingside assault should Matthew

Black (Wells)



White: (Turner) to play

Turner mistakenly castle that way, but he does not 14.0-0-0! Qe7 15.g4 Ba3 16.g5. As one can see, the initiative is developing with alarming rapidity. 16...Nd5 17.Nxd5 cxd5 18.Bxa3 Qxa3+ 19.Qb2 offers an unpleasant endgame, which black wisely avoids 19...Qe7 19...Qd6! 20.b4 Ne5 21.Rh1 Ne6 22.Bf3 a5 23.h5! 23.Bxd5 Qc5+ 24.Bc4

Ne5 23...a4 24.g6 h6 25.hxg6 Ra5 26.gxf7+ Qxf7 27.b4 a3 28.Qc3 Ra6.

Black has tried to activate, but it has all come very much too late. 29.b5! missing an elegant finish 29.Bxd5! Qxd5 30.Ne6! Qe5 31.Rxg7+ Kh8 32.Rh1+ as pointed out by David Sedgwick afterwards. 29...Nd4 30.Rxd4 Rf6 30...Qxf3 31.Rxg7+ 31.Bxd5 Be6 32.Bxe6 Qxe6 33.Rd4 Rf8 34.Rxg7+ Kh8 35.Rc7. And in this hopeless position black overstepped the time limit.

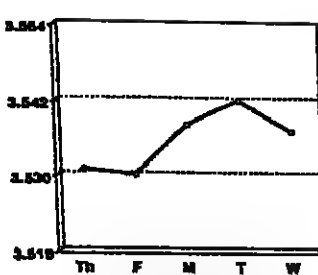
Congratulations to all those who sent in improved solutions to my problem the other week, where white with pawns on e3 and d3 had to exchange the position of his rooks. So far the best answer has been provided by Steve Ditchburn from Malta, who lopped several moves off my clumsy effort. Here is his solution. 1.Ke2 2.Bd2 3.Be1 4.Nd2 5.Rac1 6.Nb1 7.Qd2 8.Rad1 9.Qe1 10.Nd2 11.Qd1 12.Nd1 13.Be2 14.Bc1 15.Rae1 16.Kd2 17.Be2 18.Bd1 19.Ne2 20.Rhf1 21.Ng1 22.Be2 23.Rad1 24.Rhe1 25.Bf1 26.Rhe2 27.Raf1 28.Kd1 29.Rhd2 30.Be2 31.Raf1 32.Rel 33.Bd1 34.Ne2 35.Rah1 36.Ng1 37.Be2 38.Bf1 39.Ke2 40.Rhd1 41.Bd2 42.Bel 43.Nd2 44.Qe1 45.Nb1 46.Qd2 47.Rhc1 48.Qd1 49.Nd2 50.Rh1 51.Nb1 52.Bd2 53.Bc1 54.Ke1.

(© Telegraph Group)

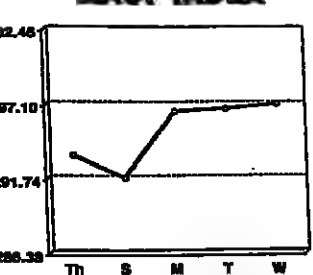
MARKETS

in brief

DOLLAR / SHEKEL

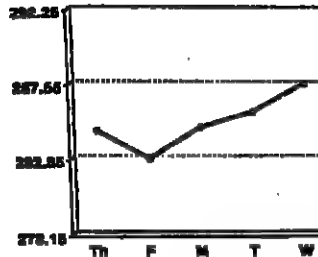


MAOF INDEX



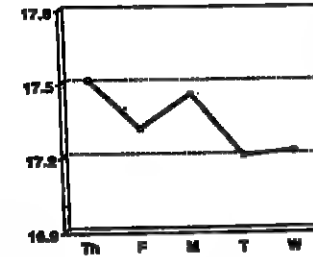
GOLD

\$ per ounce

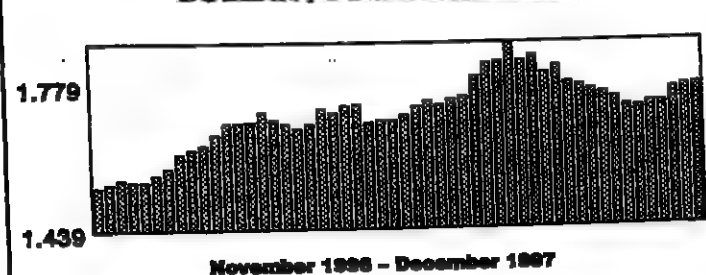


OIL

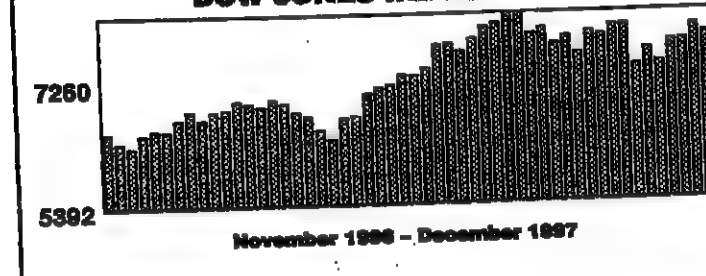
\$ per barrel of Brent crude



DOLLAR / DEUTSCHEMARK



DOW JONES INDUST. AVG.



MKs move to separate provident funds from banks

By DAVID HARRIS
and DAN GERSTENFELD

A bill to remove provident funds (*kupot gemel*) from bank management passed a preliminary reading in the Knesset yesterday, by a vote of 19 to 3.

The measure, which would prevent banks from holding any controlling interests in the funds, was introduced by Haim Dayan, Pnina Badash (Tsimet), Yehuda Harel (The Third Way), Yoni Stern (Yisrael B'Aliya),

Nissim Dahan (Shas) and Avner Shaki (NRP). It is aimed at implementing recommendations of the Beisky Commission, which probed a 1983 crash in bank share prices on the stock exchange.

Retired Judge Moshe Beisky warned again last month that there was a conflict of interests in having banks manage the funds. He said it was wrong, for example, that fund staff are being paid by banks. Furthermore, said the ex-judge, the banks charge a 0.7 percent administration fee.

Additionally, a separation of the funds from the banks would spur more competition over savings, which would lower interest rates in the long-term.

"Those who claim there is no alternative to banks managing the funds do not know about the potential profits and ingrained attractiveness of managing provident funds," said Dayan.

The banks are expected to protest and try to prevent a second reading of the bill. They have resisted similar suggestions in the past.

Senior bank managers often function as directors on provident fund investment committees.

Some funds have been criticized for tending to invest in their parent's shares and in other companies that the bank has holdings in.

As of December 31 last year NIS 109 billion or 19 percent of public savings was invested in provident funds. Of this figure, some 88% is held by the banks, according to Treasury figures.

Demand for housing falls 20%

By DAN GERSTENFELD

Demand for housing fell by 20 percent during the last 12 months, according to a survey carried out by Geocartography Institute for Spatial Analysis, which was presented yesterday in Tel Aviv at the annual conference of the real estate industry organized by the Israeli Management Center.

The survey also shows that since the elections (20 months ago) demand plunged by more than 27%.

The number of households which intend to buy apartments for themselves or one of their children in the next two years fell to 11% from 14% a year ago.

Thirty-nine percent of those who wish to buy a flat said they are looking for a 2.5-3 bedroom apartment, while 60% intend to invest less than \$125,000.

The highest demand for housing was recorded in the northern part of the country and Haifa, which accounts for 18% of the total, while the Jerusalem area attracts only 8% of the demand. The low demand for housing in the capital can be partly explained by the fact that Mod'in amounts for 6% of the general demand.

Deputy Housing Minister Meir Porush said at the conference that 1997 was one of the worst years for the property industry, saying

that housing prices fell by 19% during the first 11 months of the year from the same period in 1996.

He attributed the decrease to the slowdown in economic activity, declining numbers of new immigrants and a rise in interest rates paid on mortgages. In addition, contractors are more cautious and banks require more guarantees. He added that the property market was also faced with restrictions on the number of foreign workers and frequent closures.

Porush said the number of housing starts in 1997 is expected to fall 15% to 45,000. Porush also warned that housing starts in 1998 will not meet demand.

Contractors and Builders Association president Ori Dori predicted that the number of housing starts will continue to decline next year, falling to 38,000-40,000.

He added that the number of deals, including new and second-hand apartments, fell to 110,000 from 127,000 a year ago.

Porush said young couples don't buy apartments because the government failed to increase subsidies, leaving the average subsidized mortgage at NIS 70,000. The number of those exercising their right to enjoy subsidized loans fell by 18% in 1997.

He urged the government to intervene in the market and sup-

port the industry. In addition, Porush said there is an immediate need for investments of about NIS 5 billion in transport infrastructure, which can

be raised by issuing debt and attracting foreign investors. He added that 75% of the new immigrants from the former Soviet Union have bought a home.

Azrieli: Property market has stabilized

The recent drop in real estate prices signals a "settling down" to more realistic terms, rather than the start of a Hong Kong-style crash, David Azrieli, developer of the Shalom Project, said yesterday. "Real estate prices were too high," said the Montreal-based developer. "I believe that they have now stabilized and will stay that way."

Experts say real estate prices have fallen anywhere from 5% to 20% since the middle of 1996. Despite a slowdown in the economy and a decrease in the number of immigrants, Azrieli said the Israeli economy is "better than ever," due primarily to the burgeoning high-tech industry and the government's efforts to privatize state-owned companies and force certain sectors to close their holdings.

Last week Azrieli announced that he purchased 75% of Bank Leumi subsidiary International Consultants, a real-estate holding company, for \$30m. The transaction was the result of government directives forcing banks to dispose of non-banking activities.

"Things are moving in the right direction. Believe me, sales are not down, leasing is not down," he said. "As they say, the developers are trying themselves all the way to the bank."

Azrieli, who has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Israel, is currently working on several other potential investments, which he declined to elaborate.

Knesset OK's pay limits for gov't top brass

By DAVID HARRIS

The Knesset yesterday passed a preliminary reading of a bill to limit public sector pay to no more than five times the average wage.

The proposal, introduced by Shlomo Ben-Ami (Labor), was approved by 16 votes to 0 with government support. The bill is aimed at directors general of ministries, mayors and those holding equivalent positions, according to Ben-Ami.

Such people "must show personal responsibility when it comes to illegal wage excesses," said Ben-Ami. "Specifically at this crisis time of high unemployment there must be a sign of solidarity between the haves and have-nots, the weak and the strong, the employed and the unemployed whose world has been destroyed."

The Treasury has established a team to investigate wage excesses in the upper echelons of the public sector and has threatened to prosecute those found to be in breach of the law. The Treasury is particularly concerned by wage excesses in the local authorities, which have built up huge deficits in recent years.

"The Treasury efforts to find solutions via budget arrangements are not working," said Ben-Ami. "The Knesset must decide on a law that will sort out wages in the public service."

Talks between the Treasury and Histadrut over public sector wages for the next two years were launched on Tuesday night.

Treasury Wages and Labor Agreements Director Yossi Kucik said he was determined to ensure that wages do not rise above the rate of inflation, to help reduce public sector expenditures and keep the budget deficit within the government-approved target of 2.4 percent in 1998 and down to 1.5% by 2001.

Koor negotiating with PA on cellular network

Koor is conducting intensive negotiations with the Palestinian Authority to set up and operate a cellular telephone network in its territory. It would use GSM technology, in conjunction with Canadian telecommunications manufacturer

Northern Telecom (Nortel). The project is estimated to be worth hundreds of millions of dollars. The negotiations are being conducted by Koor general manager Benny Gaon, Nortel representatives and a senior figure in the PA.

At the same time, Motorola International is also conducting negotiations with the PA to set up a cellular network. The talks have run into many difficulties, while there has been progress in the negotiations with Koor.

Koor has widespread connections with the PA, supplying all its cement needs through Nesher and all its steel through Steel Works. Koor has reportedly been negotiating with the PA over the cellular network for the last three years, with no connection to the tender published a year ago.

Koor's spokesperson refused to respond to the report, stating that the concern does not comment on its activities with the PA.

On Tuesday, Nortel Communication Holdings, a subsidiary of Nortel, acquired a 20 percent stake in ArelNet, a Yavne-based developer of networking systems, through a private placement of \$5 million.

Earlier this year Nortel bought 20% of Telrad Telecommunication and Electronic Industries for \$45m.

THE JERUSALEM POST

ISRAEL is more
than a few pages

Israel Ports and Railways Authority Ports Development Administration Notice of Planned Procurement and "Pre-Qualification" of Contractors

Pursuant to the Agreement on Government Procurement and the Tender Laws of the State of Israel, The Israel Ports and Railways Authority ("PRA") notifies

MARINE CONTRACTORS

that it anticipates that the PRA will be tendering for the supply of works from Qualified Marine Contractors for the Construction of a Staging Harbour in the Port of Ashdod.

1. The Marine Contractor which will carry out the works will be chosen in accordance with a selective competitive process from among those Marine Contractors which have been Pre-Qualified. The process may involve negotiations.
2. The Pre-Qualification Documents for Marine Contractors may be obtained from Eng. Shai Vaxman, S.A.D.G. Engineering & Construction Ltd., Ashdod North Port 1995- Project, 4 Hata'asia Street, Tel Aviv 67139, Israel, beginning on December 18, 1997 and until January 15, 1998, between 8:30 and 15:30, Sundays through Thursdays, after payment of N.I.S. 2,340 including VAT (which sum is approximately \$660 US) by means of a check in N.I.S. made out to the order of the "Ports and Railways Authority" delivered to:
Menachem Halperin, Treasurer
Ports and Railways Authority, Head Office
Room 1121
74 Petach Tikvah Road
Tel Aviv, 67215, Israel

The Pre-Qualification Documents, completed in English, must be received by the PRA at the address set out in the Documents no later than 14:00 on Sunday, February 1, 1998.

3. A conference in connection with the Staging Harbour works will be held at the Port of Ashdod, Visitor's Center, on January 12, 1998 at 10:00. Participation in the conference is not mandatory but is highly recommended.
4. The Pre-Qualification Process shall be governed solely by the provisions contained in the Pre-Qualification Documents. In order to be designated by the PRA as a Qualified Marine Contractor, the Marine Contractor must demonstrate that it meets the requirements set out in full in the Pre-Qualification Documents. The professional requirements, in brief summary form, are as follows:

Experience in the construction of Rubble Mound Breakwaters (or Seawalls) and of Anchored Steel Sheet-Pile Walls and in Dredging and Filling for sea reclamation.

5. In the event that a Non-Israeli Qualified Contractor is chosen to carry out the works, it must enter into an Undertaking for Commercial Cooperation with the State of Israel with regard to the limited incorporation of domestic content, offset procurement, or transfer of technology. The Undertaking will pertain to 35% of the Contract Price- out of which percentage domestic sub-contracting will amount to at least 20% of the Contract Price.

6. A more detailed summary of the requirements and terms ("Summary Announcement of Planned Procurement"), including details of the financial requirements, legal status requirements, etc., will be furnished by the PRA via Fax, without charge, upon request to Eng. Shai Vaxman, Tel: +972-3-562-2080; Fax: +972-3-562-0044; E-Mail: pmc.ash@netvision.net.il. It is not anticipated that any further notices will be published in connection with this procurement.

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48% of non-
profit
organizations
conceal
earnings

By JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

Forty-eight percent of Jerusalem-based non-profit organizations and public institutions conceal their earnings from the Income Tax Authority, a statement issued yesterday said.

A raid on non-profit institutions conducted this week revealed 148 organizations that receive special tax status - including museums, old-age homes, dental clinics, publishing houses and community centers - are in violation of the tax law. Inspectors also found that 38 percent of the organizations keep inaccurate books.

Income Tax Commissioner Doron Levy said such violations are proving to be widespread.

"This is the third operation we conducted this year, and in all of them similar findings were discovered," said Levy. He said that some violators may lose their special tax status.

The Income Tax Authority said the violations total about NIS 2 million.

During questioning, investigators found that several institutions had hidden revenues of up to NIS 350,000.

TASE mixed amid fear over slowdown

Tel Aviv

Israeli stocks were mixed yesterday, as investors expressed concern about unemployment and inflation figures that indicate the continuation of an economic slowdown.

Chemical companies Agan Chemical Manufacturers and Makhshim Chemicals rose as foreign investors bought the affiliated chemical companies, said Zvi Hoffman, manager of mutual funds at Meitav Ltd., a Tel Aviv investment firm. Agan jumped 4.25 percent and Makhshim rose 3.33 percent.

The Maof Index of 25 stocks rose 0.10 percent to 297.10. The Mishkan Index rose 0.06 percent to 284.25. The Tel Aviv Continuous Trading Index rose 0.29 percent to 95.63. The general bond index fell 0.2 percent to 112.68.

"Profitability is liable to be hurt" as a result of slower economic growth in Israel, said Asher Sela, a portfolio manager at Etgar Ltd. Israel's employment service said on Monday that the number of job seekers rose 1.2 percent in November. At the same time, the Central Bureau of Statistics said the consumer price index dropped 0.3 percent in November on lower housing and produce prices, bolstering concern consumers have less money to spend.

Declining shares were led by Teva Pharmaceutical Industries

Ltd., Israel's largest drugmaker, which fell 2.25 percent. Teva's American depositary receipts fell 1/16 to 42 7/16 in New York Tuesday.

"If Clal can get rid of Clal Trading, it will help the company use its resources on better things," said Meitav's Hoffman.

Europe

UK stocks fell after a smaller-than-expected drop in November retail sales revived concern interest rates may rise again soon, clouding the profit outlook.

Sales at stores and supermarkets fell 0.4 percent in November from October, as shops sold fewer clothes and household goods. The decline was smaller than the 0.9 percent drop expected by economists surveyed by Bloomberg News.

"Everyone has been talking down the boom-bust cycle, but there is still a risk that growth is going to be stronger than expected," said Neil Birrell, the head of equities at Framlington Group in London, which has \$3 billion invested in British shares. Retailers such as Marks & Spencer Plc, Britain's largest clothing retailer, led declines on the FTSE 350 index, which combines the benchmark FTSE 100 index and the FTSE 250 index of medium-sized companies.

The FTSE 350 Index fell 4.9 points, or 0.20 percent, to 2488.2



Maof 297.1 ▲ 0.1%

Dow Jones 7957 ▼ 0.24%

FTSE 5190.80 ▼ 0.24%

Nikkei 16541.06 ▲ 3.48%

Asia

Japanese stocks soared after Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto called for a 2 trillion yen (\$15.4 billion) income-tax cut to stimulate the economy by boosting consumer demand.

The one-time tax cut would be implemented this year through March 1998, Hashimoto said in a nationally televised press conference yesterday morning. This follows a 330 billion yen corporate tax cut that Hashimoto's ruling Liberal Democratic Party

announced Tuesday.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 stock average rose 355.85 yen, or 3.5 percent, to 16,541.06. Sony Corp., Marui Co. and Sanwa Bank Ltd. led the advance.

"The market's saying that if consumer sentiment rebounds on the back of the income-tax cuts, that'll translate into a recovery in consumer spending," said Zenshiro Mizuno, managing director and general manager of the stock trading department at Marusan Securities Co. The Toxix index of all shares on the first section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange climbed 28.53 points, or 2.4 percent, to 127.95.

"Innovative schemes, new vision are what the market's looking for," said Jeremy Markwick-Smith, deputy director of overseas equity sales at UBS Securities Ltd. in Tokyo. "I think this is certainly very unexpected and seen as a sign of new thinking and a more aggressive approach" to boosting the economy.

Companies that produce consumer goods rose on news of the tax cuts. Sony, a maker of stereos, televisions and digital camcorders, rose 900 yen, or 8 percent, to 11,800. Canon Inc., a maker of copiers, printers and semiconductor-making equipment, rose 130 yen to 3,080. Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., a maker of air conditioners, mobile phones and "Panasonic" brand audio equipment, rose 40 yen to 1,840.

That's a little inhibiting," said Eric Miller, chief strategist at Donaldson, Lufkin and Jenrette, said of 3M's announcement. "There is still a little apprehension regarding earnings." Advancing issues outnumbered decliners by a 5-to-4 margin on the New York Stock Exchange. (Bloomberg)

Wall Street

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks finished lower yesterday as concerns about blue-chip earnings estimates triggered late selling on the Dow Jones Industrial Average.

On Wall Street, the Dow Jones average dropped 18.90 points to close at 7,957.41. The drop, which followed a nearly 60-point gain earlier in the day, cut short two days of gains.

The market got an early morning boost from Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's surprise proposal for \$15.38 billion in special income tax cuts. The announcement helped soothe worries over the effect of the Asian crisis on US businesses.

But investors began to fear poor earnings showings by blue-chip companies following a disappointing announcement by Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co. The company estimated that the dollar's strength would cut fourth-quarter earnings by 10 percent. The company is set to announce earnings of \$375 million, or 90 cents a share, on January 27.

"That's a little inhibiting," said Eric Miller, chief strategist at Donaldson, Lufkin and Jenrette, said of 3M's announcement. "There is still a little apprehension regarding earnings."

Advancing issues outnumbered decliners by a 5-to-4 margin on the New York Stock Exchange.

Dollar rises as traders await Japanese stimulus plan

The dollar rose against other major currencies yesterday, gaining against the Japanese yen after the government delayed the unveiling of its economic stimulus plan and preliminary details left traders unimpressed.

The US currency also rose against the German mark on disappointing results of a survey on German business confidence.

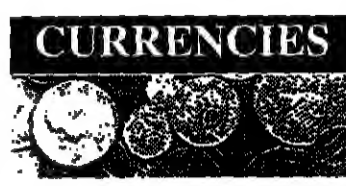
The dollar advanced against both currencies early, but lost some of those gains after the Federal Reserve left interest rates unchanged.

"The real eyes are still on the Far East," said Ron Hudson, vice president of corporate sales at Royal Bank of Scotland. "We've been waiting for some-

thing to come out of there." Dealings were quiet as traders awaited the plan to revive Japan's ailing financial sector. Government disclosure of a proposed \$6.5 billion tax cut and a recommendation to issue \$77 billion in bonds to shore up troubled banks failed to surprise or encourage traders.

"This thing has been a bad secret for a couple of days now," said Dennis Heidt, a trader at Banque Paribas. "I don't think it was a real big mover." In late New York trading, the dollar was quoted at 130.78 yen, up from 130.68 late Monday. The dollar also was changing hands at 1.7822 marks, up from 1.7740.

Despite traders' pessimism about the prospects for Japan's economic recovery, Heidt said the early po-



Dollar 3.537 ▼ 0.14%

Basket 3.8035 ▲ 0.3%

Mark 2.002 ▲ 0.7%

Sterling 5.8406 ▲ 1.07%

posals seemed like a step in the right direction. He also lauded South Korea's decision to allow its won currency to trade freely

against the dollar, which boosted the won 12 percent Tuesday and could spur a recovery in neighboring currencies.

"Once that situation settles down, there will be a reverse trickle effect," Heidt said.

While the yen suffered against the dollar, it was higher against the mark, which was battered by a report that the widely watched Ifo index of western German business confidence slipped below analysts' expectations. The report, which dimmed the prospects for a future German interest rate hike, also pushed the mark lower vs. the dollar.

The US currency also gained against its German counterpart, because it is generally stronger

toward the end of the year and because of doubts regarding the strength of Europe's planned common currency, said Hudson of Royal Bank of Scotland.

"We're approaching 1998, the year of the euro, and that might be a period of instability," he said. Participating countries will be selected in 1998 for the new euro currency, which is slated for launch in 1999.

Other late dollar rates in New York, compared with late Monday: 1.4403 Swiss francs, up from 1.4318; 5.9645 French francs, up from 5.9404; 1.7465 Italian lire, up from 1.7385; and 1.4224 Canadian dollars, up from 1.4206.

The British pound was quoted at \$1.6353, up from \$1.6316. (AP)

Crude oil depressed by rise in US supplies

Precious metals

Platinum rose yesterday as the yen rose against the dollar, improving prospects for demand in Japan, the largest market for the precious metal. The higher yen makes dollar-priced platinum more affordable for Japanese consumers. Platinum for immediate delivery in London rose \$8.50 to \$350 an ounce.

Gold rose amid expectations the metal's 23 percent slide in 1997 won't resume before year end, as demand for the metal among jewelers reaches its seasonal peak. Traders who sold gold this year on the expectation prices would fall may now be taking advantage of

prices near 18-year lows to buy it. Spot gold rose \$3.95 to \$389.20 an ounce in London inter-bank trading.

Silver rose. The surge in silver follows a 2.6% drop in silver stocks monitored by the Comex division of the New York Stock Exchange to 119.226 million ounces, its lowest level in more than 12 1/2 years. Silver for immediate delivery traded at \$6.065 an ounce, a rise of 2.5 cents.

Oil

Brent crude oil futures were depressed by an across-the-board rise in US supplies, reported by the



Gold \$286.85 ▲ 1.9%

Crude Oil \$17.22 ▼ 0.04%

CRB 233.38 ▲ 0.37%

American Petroleum Institute after markets closed Tuesday night. Still, futures prices could be underpinned by cold weather in Europe boosting oil product demand, as London traders were met with

snow flurries yesterday morning. US products could also stem a slide in prices because refining problems emerged in the US yesterday. February Brent futures declined 6 cents to \$17.31 a barrel.

Others

Coffee fell, following a 9.9 percent plunge Tuesday in New York, as swelling exchange inventories signaled that a recent supply shortfall is at an end. Coffee for March delivery fell \$80 to \$1.695 a metric ton on the London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange.

Copper rose. The London Metal Exchange's global copper stock-

pile fell for a sixth day amid robust demand for refined metal in the US and China, the world's largest and third-largest copper consumers. While sagging currencies, higher interest rates and slower economic growth in much of East Asia has reduced global metals consumption in recent months, demand for metal products remains strong in North America. Copper for three month delivery climbed \$10.50 to trade at \$1.765 a ton on the LME.

Aluminum climbed. The LME's global aluminum stockpile fell 3,950 metric tons to 632,525 tons, the exchange said in its daily report. Three-month aluminum traded at \$1.535 a ton on the LME, a rise of \$18. (Bloomberg)

US bonds fall as dollar tumbles against yen

US bonds fell yesterday as the dollar plunged, after Japan's prime minister unexpectedly announced a plan to cut income taxes and the Bank of Japan sold dollars for the first time in more than five years.

The US currency fell more than 3 percent after Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto called for the tax cut to stimulate Japan's foundering economy. Eisuke Sakakibara, the country's vice finance minister for international affairs, said the central bank sold dollars for yen.

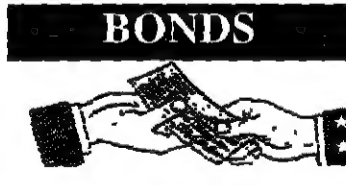
"This removes the worst fears" about a widespread collapse of Asia's financial markets, said David Connors, head of government bond trading at Credit

Suisse First Boston. The US bond market's "negative reaction was correct," he said, as the moves may curb buying of Treasury securities by investors fleeing turmoil in Asia, Connors said.

The benchmark 30-year Treasury bond fell 3/8, or \$3.75 per \$1,000 bond, to 101 7/8, pushing its yield up 3 basis points to 5.99 percent. The two-year note yield rose 2 basis points to 5.68 percent.

Thirty-year bond yields could rise to 6.10 percent in coming days as safe-haven buying of Treasuries wanes, Connors said.

US bonds soared since late October, pushing yields down more than 40 basis points, as troubles in Asia drove investors to the



US 30-year T-bill yield

5.99 ▲ 0.03

safety of US debt. Bonds also benefited from speculation that falling exports to Pacific Rim nations will weigh on US economic growth, keeping a lid on inflation.

Now, the plan to boost Japan's economy, as well as International

Monetary Fund bailouts of Korea, Indonesia and Thailand, may restore confidence in the region. It "takes some of the luster off" of Treasuries as a safe haven, said George Adell, a trader at Philadelphia-based Starboard Capital Markets.

Japan's announcement was "a huge surprise," said Sonja Gibbs, a US bond market strategist at Nomura Securities in London.

To be sure, some traders said a recovery in Japan will take time and won't derail US bonds anytime soon. They point to the lowest inflation rate in more than a decade and the relatively high yields of US securities.

"The market in general has a bullish tone," said Bill Edwards,

a trader at Nikko Securities International Inc. in New York. "All things considered, any [drop in price] will be looked at as a buying opportunity."

Bonds were little changed Tuesday after Federal Reserve officials voted to leave interest rates unchanged at a sixth consecutive policy meeting. The central bank last changed rates in March, raising the target for overnight bank loan rates a quarter percentage point to 5.5 percent.

Traders and investors will get few new clues on the strength of the economy until today, when the government releases figures on the trade deficit for October and last week's initial jobless claims. (Bloomberg)

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Inside

Maccabi looking for miracle

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Sports Editors
Joe Hoffman & Ori Lewis

Galil advance to sweet 16

By ELI GRONER

Galil Elyon needed a six-point victory entering last night's basketball game against the French Montpellier club to advance to the Korac Cup's round of 16. The northerners jumped out to a seven-point advantage after two minutes and never looked back, cruising to an 80-57 triumph.

Galil's opponent in the next round — a home-and-home series on January 14 and 21 — will in all likelihood be Verona (Italy).

Andrew Kennedy led the way against his former club, scoring 24 points on 10-16 shooting, while grabbing nine rebounds as well. He was ably assisted by Gur Shelef, whose linescore included 12 points, five boards, five assists and two steals.

David Blatt's club was able to put the game away early by turning a bevy of Montpellier turnovers into easy transition baskets. "We've been in an offensive slump lately. Fortunately, today we were able to break loose," said Blatt.

The northerners put the game away, for all intents and purposes, in the first 15 minutes, with a 30-12 run to start the game. A disciplined 2-3 zone defense helped limit the Frenchmen to a mere 19 points during the entire first half.

Lindsay Howell tallied 17 points in the loss.

In other Israeli action in European play last night, Maccabi Ra'anana defeated Kiev 60-54 in the final first-round game of EuroCup play, and Maccabi Rishon LeZion defeated Beobanka 86-82 in Korac Cup competition.

Ra'anana, along with Hapoel Eilat, will advance to the EuroCup round of 32 as No. 3 seeds in their respective divisions. On January 13, Ra'anana will be at home against Ostend (Belgium) while Eilat will host Patras (Greece).

Rishon, however, ended its European run, unable to overcome a 20-point deficit from its first encounter with the Polish club.

Uruguay top S. Africa in Confed Cup

RIYADH (Reuters) — An injury-time goal from Christian Callejas gave Uruguay a 4-3 win over South Africa in a thrilling end to the group matches at the Confederations' Cup yesterday.

Playing with virtually a reserve team, the youthful Uruguayans led 3-1 with 25 minutes left but allowed South Africa back into the game before snatching a late winner.

South Africa needed to win the match by six clear goals to steal a semifinal place away from the Czech Republic.

Bite to the finish

LONDON — The "bite of the century" between Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield has been voted the top sports story of 1997 in a worldwide poll by the AP.

Anderson keys Cavs' win over Suns

Knicks win ninth straight in friendly Madison Square Garden

CLEVELAND (AP) — Derek Anderson scored a career-high 19 points and started a decisive fourth-quarter run as the Cleveland Cavaliers defeated the Phoenix Suns 103-90 Tuesday night.

Cleveland, which had a 10-game winning streak snapped Saturday against Charlotte, broke open a tight game with a 13-0 run midway through the fourth to hand the Suns their third straight loss.

Shawn Kemp had 21 points and 11 rebounds for the Cavs, while rookie Brevin Knight had 16 points and 12 assists.

Antonio McDyess led Phoenix with 21 points.

Jazz 103, Heat 95

John Stockton and Jeff Hornacek sparked a 10-0 run to start the second half as visiting Utah beat Miami for the seventh straight time.

Karl Malone scored 29 points for the Jazz, who snapped a three-game road losing streak. Hornacek finished with 18 points and Stockton had 14.

The Heat, which lost to a Western Conference team for the first time in five games this season, were led by Tim Hardaway's 21 points.

Lakers 109, Timberwolves 96

Eddie Jones scored 32 points as visiting Los Angeles remained undefeated against the Midwest Division.

Elden Campbell, playing his 13th game at center in place of injured Shaquille O'Neal, added 22 points for the Lakers, who improved to 12-0 against the Midwest.

Nick Van Exel had 12 points and 14 assists, and Kobe Bryant had 19 points and six rebounds for Los Angeles.

Kevin Garnett had 21 points and 18 rebounds for Minnesota, while Tom Gugliotta had 18 points and 11 rebounds.

Knicks 83, Pistons 78

Patrick Ewing scored 31 points, including host New York's only two field goals in the last six minutes, as the Knicks recovered after nearly blowing a late 17-point lead.

It was the ninth straight home victory for New York, which hasn't lost at Madison Square Garden since the home opener against Detroit.

New York led 75-58 early in the fourth quarter and still held a 77-64 lead after Ewing scored with 6:57 left. But the Knicks scored only six points the rest of the way, and Detroit nearly came all the way back.

Rockets 118, Grizzlies 91

Kevin Willis had 23 points and 10 rebounds, and Clyde Drexler had 22 points, 10 assists and six steals as Houston won at home.

The Rockets built a 62-43 half-time lead and didn't ease up in the second half. Willis scored Houston's first six points of the third quarter and Matt Maloney had a pair of 3-point baskets to help the Rockets take an 85-65 lead into the final period.

Shaun Livingston led the Grizzlies with 18 points.

Spurs 99, Nuggets 85

David Robinson had 22 points and 14 rebounds as San Antonio ended a four-game road losing streak.

Tim Duncan added 20 points and eight rebounds for the Spurs, who have held 10 opponents under 90 points this season.



RAY OF SUNSHINE — Suns' Antonio McDyess slam dunks in first-quarter action against the Cavaliers. McDyess sank 21 points in Cleveland's 103-90 win on Tuesday.

Eric Washington had 14 points for the Nuggets, who shot a season-low 35 percent from the field. Denver has lost five straight and nine of its last 11.

SuperSonics 109, Clippers 94

Gary Payton scored 25 points and Dale Ellis added a season-high 23 as host Seattle won its fourth straight.

The Sonics improved to 19-5, the best record in the NBA.

Brent Barry scored 21 points for the Clippers, who lost their fourth consecutive game, including a defeat at Seattle on Sunday.

Warriors 103, Mavericks 92

Joe Smith scored a season-high

28 points and Donyell Marshall added 22 as host Golden State handed Dallas its sixth straight loss. The Warriors are 4-3 since star Latrell Sprewell was suspended for attacking coach P.J. Carlesimo.

Kings 94, Trail Blazers 87

Cortis Williamson scored 26 points and rookie Michael Stewart grabbed a season-high 15 rebounds as Sacramento won at home.

Williamson and Stewart sparked an 18-4 run at the start of the third quarter that gave the Kings a 62-53 lead. Sacramento held Portland to one field goal and four points in the first 9:10 of the period.

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Miami	15	7	.682	—
Orlando	16	6	.667	—
New York	14	9	.609	1 1/2
New Jersey	12	10	.545	3
Boston	10	12	.455	5
Washington	10	14	.417	6
Philadelphia	6	15	.286	10 1/2

Central Division

W	L	Pct.	GB	
Atlanta	18	5	.783	—
Cleveland	15	7	.682	2 1/2
Charlotte	14	7	.667	3
Indiana	14	6	.636	3 1/2
Chicago	14	9	.609	4
Milwaukee	11	11	.500	6 1/2
Detroit	11	13	.455	7 1/2
Toronto	2	21	.087	16

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Houston	13	7	.650	—
Utah	14	9	.609	1/2
San Antonio	13	10	.565	1 1/2
Minnesota	9	13	.409	5
Vancouver	9	15	.375	6
Dallas	5	18	.217	10 1/2
Denver	2	28	.051	12

Pacific Division

W	L	Pct.	GB	
Seattle	19	5	.792	—
LA Lakers	18	5	.783	1/2
Phoenix	13	8	.619	4 1/2
Portland	13	9	.591	5
Sacramento	8	16	.333	11
Golden State	5	18	.220	12 1/2
LA Clippers	4	20	.167	15

Villeneuve Canada's top athlete

TORONTO (AP) — Formula One champion Jacques Villeneuve has won the Lou Marsh Award as Canada's top athlete the second time in three years.

The award, sponsored by the *Toronto Star*, is named after the

newspaper's former sports editor. Villeneuve, 26, a native of Irberville, Quebec, who makes his home in Monte Carlo, was a narrow winner in a field of seven finalists.

The other contenders were

kayaker Carolyn Brunet, golfer Lori Kane, speedskater Carole Le May Doan, bobsled driver Pierre Lueders, figure skater Elvis Stojko and baseball's Larry Walker.

Judges extended the list of finalists to seven this year instead of the normal five because of the number of quality candidates.

The winner was chosen Tuesday by representatives of CBC-TV, The Canadian Press, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star* and the *Toronto Sun*.

Villeneuve also won the award in 1995. Sprinter Donovan Bailey won last year.

The Williams-Renault driver won seven races and became the first Canadian to win the Formula One championship.

The slight Canadian, who made headlines on and off the circuit, captured the world title in Jerez, Spain, when he overcame a jolting challenge from German rival Michael Schumacher.

SCOREBOARD

ENGLISH SOCCER: Tuesday's results: FA Cup, second round replays - Basingstoke 0, Northampton 0 after extra time (Northampton wins 4-3 on penalties); Boreham Wood 0, Cheltenham 2; Chesterfield 0, Grimsby 2; Hereford 1, Colchester 1 after extra time (Hereford wins 5-4 on penalties); Notts County 1, Preston 2 (after extra time); Watford 2, Torquay 1 (after extra time).

Man Utd draw Monaco in European Cup quarterfinals

Juve face Dynamo Kiev; Chelsea take on Real Betis in Cup Winners Cup; Villa vs. Atletico Madrid in UEFA Cup

GENEVA (AP) — The quarterfinals of Europe's three major cup competitions resonated with an even stronger German accent after yesterday's draw.

In the most prestigious of the three cups — the European Cup — three German teams are still in the race and Bayern Munich and defending champion Borussia Dortmund were drawn to face each other in the quarterfinals.

The other German side Bayer Leverkusen drew Real Madrid — one of the favorites. Juventus, runners-up last season and champions in 1996, is up against Dynamo Kiev, one of the most impressive clubs in Champions League play. Manchester United, another of the favorites, seemed to get a favorable draw with French league side AS Monaco.

In the UEFA Cup, last year's two finalists drew each other in the quarterfinals with defending champion Schalke of Germany up against runner-up Inter Milan. In the Cup Winners Cup, favorite Chelsea drew Spain's Seville-based Real Betis.

Five German teams remain in the three cups with Italy claiming four and England and Spain with three each.

Like Munich, Leverkusen, Juventus and Monaco are home for the first leg, which is generally seen as a disadvantage. Juventus Vice President Roberto Bettge suggested it didn't make much difference.

"When you are talking about the quarterfinals in the Champions League, we are not talking about easy games," he said.

Manchester United didn't hide its pleasure at drawing Monaco. "The idea of going to Monaco is very

attractive to us. I'm sure the French know a lot about Manchester United," said Manchester United Secretary Kenneth Menzies.

"I think (manager) Alex (Ferguson) will be very pleased at playing away in the first leg."

The two legs of the European Cup quarterfinals are March 4 and 18. The UEFA Cup is March 3 and 17 with the Cup Winners Cup set for March 5 and 19.

There will be a re-match in the UEFA Cup with defending champion Schalke of Germany up against Inter Milan. The two met in the two-legged final last season with Schalke prevailing on penalty kicks after a 1-1 aggregate draw. Inter won the cup in 1991 and '94.

In the other UEFA Cup quarterfinals, Ajax faces Spartak Moscow, Italian side Lazio is up against France's Auxerre and Spanish side Atletico Madrid has England's Aston Villa. Ajax, Inter, Lazio and Atletico are home for the first leg.

In the Cup Winners Cup, the favorite Chelsea of England drew Spain's Real Betis. In the other quarterfinals, Roda JC of the Netherlands plays Vicenza of Italy, Slavia Prague faces VfB Stuttgart of Germany, and AEK Athens is up against Lokomotiv Moscow. Roda, Prague, Athens and Betis are home in the first leg.

British bookmakers installed Manchester United a 9-4 favorite to win the European Cup with Juventus at 11-4 and Real Madrid at 7-2. Monaco is the longest shot at 25-1.

Inter Milan is a 2-1 favorite in the UEFA Cup and Lazio is at 7-2. Stuttgart is 5-2 to win the Cup Winners Cup with Chelsea at 11-4.

Nagano vs. nature

THE 1998 WINTER OLYMPICS have been overshadowed by the threat of a major earthquake in Japan. A 7.5 magnitude quake struck the area around Nagano, the site of the games, on Tuesday night.

The quake, which caused a few injuries and damaged some buildings, was felt throughout the country. It was the first major quake in the area since 1960.

The Japanese government has ordered a full-scale inspection of the area around Nagano. The Olympic organizers have also ordered a full-scale inspection of the venues.

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